THE EXTREME MUSIC MAGAZINE

NO. 42

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STRAPPING YOUNG LAD

AMON AMARTH

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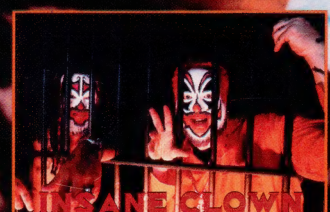

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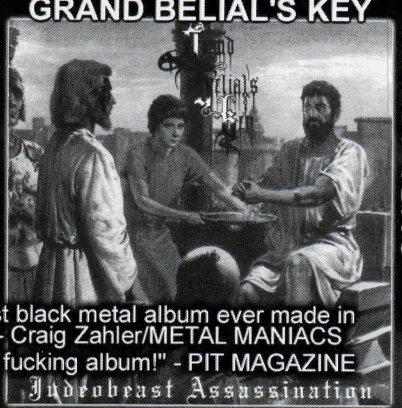

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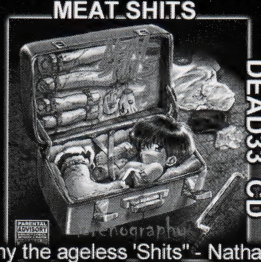

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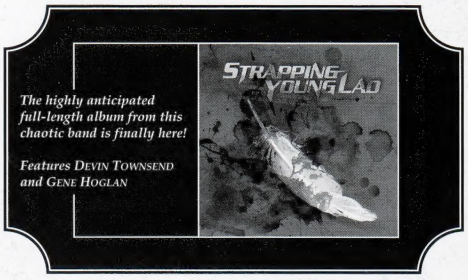
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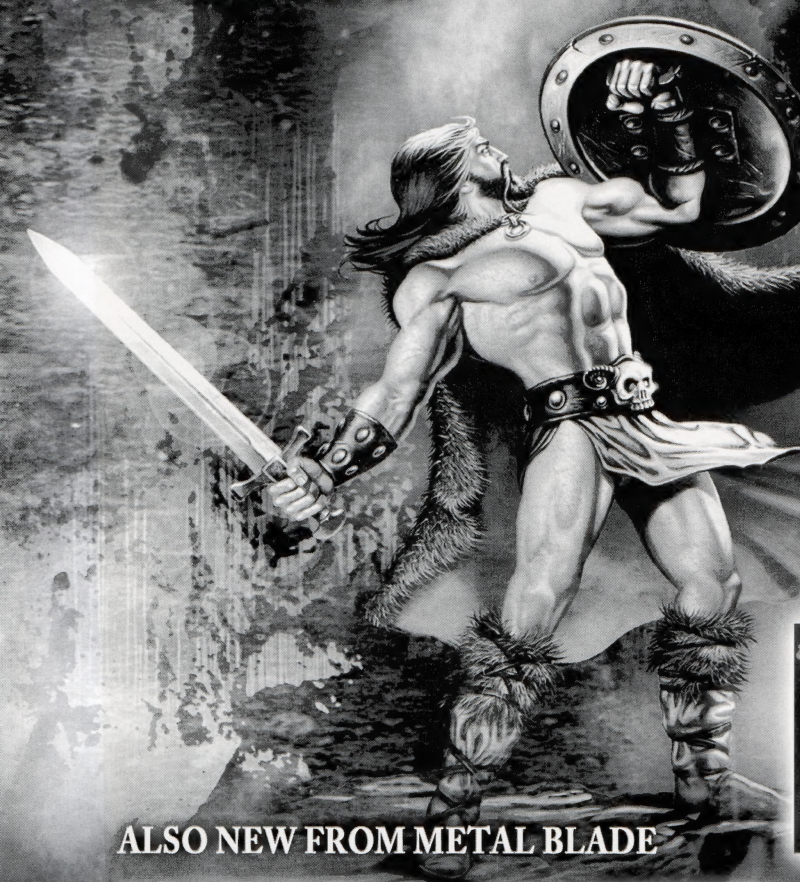

AMON AMARTH *seem to be incapable of doing a weak album and with their trademarks they not only managed to create another high quality masterpiece, but they definitely also have their own sound within the much crowded Death Metal-scene. As the title implies, these five Swedes take on the world and trust me, with an album like "Versus The World", the odds are damn good that they will conquer it!*

–Metal Observer Nov 2002

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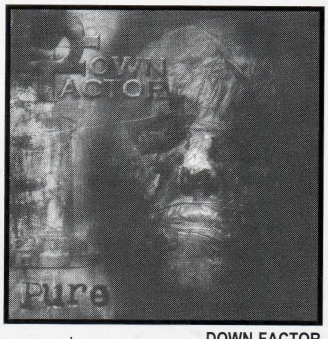

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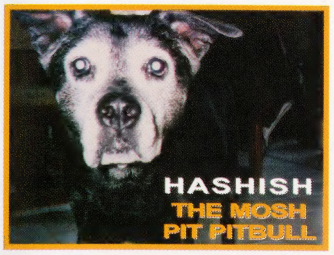

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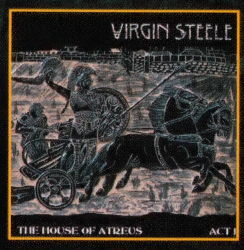

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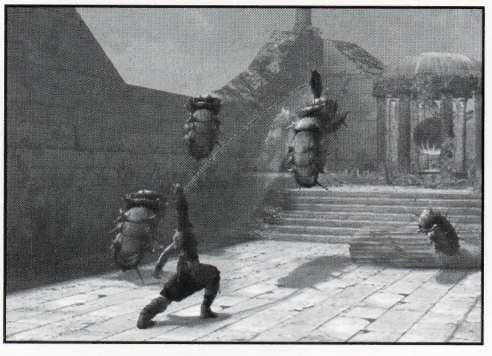
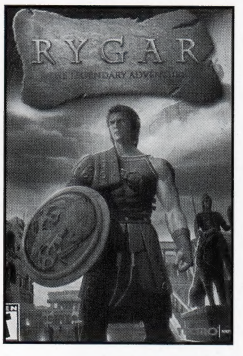
LIMP WRISTS & BLOODIED THUMBS

By Jim Mills

I remember years ago when I used to play sports, at the end of the year we would go to a pizza joint where there was an arcade. In this arcade, there was an incredibly hard game called **RYGAR**. I thought it was a fun game, but I sucked, a lot. Later on, Nintendo released a home version, which was also hard, but mainly due to the terrible play control. Like I mentioned, it was years ago.





RYGAR
The Legendary Adventure
Tecmo: www.tecmoinc.com

The new **RYGAR** game falls nothing short of fucking awesome. Everything in this game is great. No joke here. It has great action, music, graphics, and a story all metal fans will love. Why, you ask? Mainly because almost 40% of heavy metal bands draw influence from Greek mythology. You will find all of your favorite bands in the game, like CEREBUS, HADES, and AMBROSIA (yes they're metal).

Some of the key aspects of **RYGAR** that set it apart from the rest of the games are the musical score, and the graphics. The music was created by the Moscow International Symphonic Orchestra, so it's not cheesy, lame, video game music. The music helps the different atmospheres of each area shine through, thus enhancing the levels so they are more enjoyable. **RYGAR**'s scenery and music beats the competition's, by far.

If you are familiar with games like DEVIL MAY CRY and OMINUSHA, **RYGAR** is pretty much the mirror image in play control and features. You can do combos and get inventive with them to slay your way to the end.

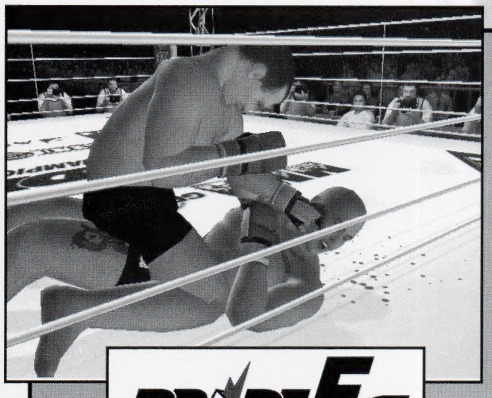
Overall, **RYGAR** will bring back the fond memories you had when you were younger. It has elements from the arcade game, and the Nintendo game as well. You will be pleased to see that you have three different discarmors now, not just one. You will also be able to earn power-up points, which will enable you to power up your discarmor, thus making the slaughter much easier. They also brought back the "pulley," remember how terrible they were to use? Well they're better now, and there are a lot more of them.

New to the **RYGAR** world is the interchangeable diskarmor. There are three different diskarmors, and each one possesses a special feature. Hades, Heavenly & Sea diskarmors. Like in the military, your weapon is your best friend. There are plenty of things to bust up and break (which will give you hidden stuff), and tons of fiends to cut in half. However, the scenery and music steal the show here.

Final Thoughts...

Gladly Tecmo is coming back with **RYGAR** *Ninja Gaiden*, and they hit a home run. **RYGAR** is a rock solid game, and it keeps you coming back to play it again and again. Fuck, I have spent over 12 hours playing it. It's that kind of game! Fucking awesome!

TECMO PlayStation.2



THQ: www.thq.com

Extreme music fans like extreme stuff. That's why so many metal fans like UFC. Well, over in Japan, full contact fighting is taken way more seriously than it is in America. America thinks boxing is the sport of all sports, for fighting. In Japan, there are companies hosting events that draw fighters from everywhere in the world. The thing is though, all these fighters are tough as a motherfucker. PRIDE is a company that is making its face known here in America, and has the best fighters in the world. No Ken Shamrock, or Tank Abbot. The rules are a bit different than UFC, which makes it cooler in my opinion. THQ is bringing the madness from PRIDE, making a home video game about it. You will be able to pick your favorite fighter, then proceed to maul your friend. Learn the skills of knocking some clown out with a one inch punch, or make them scream like a power metal weenie and twist their leg into pieces. Brutal stuff, for fans of brutality. (Not the band).

THQ PlayStation.2

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illustration by Mike Bohatch - www.eyesofchaos.com

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DRUM CORNER

By Colin Davis
Photo By Fraser

Featuring Alex Hernandez of IMMOLATION

The name IMMOLATION is synonymous with death metal. Hailing from upstate New York, they are true masters of the art. They are especially known for their dark style and anti-Christian lyrics, and are one of the few bands in the genre and can be accurately described as 'Evil'. IMMOLATION have written some of the most spine-tingling, off-the-wall riffs ever created and do something to the senses that is just plain eerie. This time we interview their drummer, Alex Hernandez. Alex has a unique style and he must work quite hard to keep his playing as interesting as the rest of the music.

Pit: Alex, I got a promo for your new album, Unholy Cult, *from your European label, Listenable Records. Nice surprise! To me, this one really stands out as being the product of true inspiration. Great songs.*

Alex Hernandez: Thank you for your kind words. We all worked very hard on this one, but we always do. I feel very confident that fans will enjoy this record.

You're actually the second drummer for IMMOLATION. *The first guy I liked just as well, but back then the music was slower and there were no blast beats. I remember them saying that they didn't need any. They had that one gallop triplet beat instead. You play blast beats now, though.*

I've always had great admiration for Craig. In fact, when I met him I told him that his shoes were going to be hard to fill. For me, the blast beats were a good challenge. The first and second albums didn't really have a need for blast beats. When I joined the band I tried to incorporate them into the music, slowly but surely. Sometimes I have a need for speed. We still use the triplet beats; I just take it up a notch. We call it the Hyper Triplet Blast Beat.

IMMOLATION *has always used those really big, sweeping tom rolls. The other drummer used them a lot, I remember, and you're doing them as well. Do the other guys like those rolls or something? I always like those a lot because they really stand out. When you just hit the toms really fast and sporadically, it doesn't sound too good on tape. I can hear all your rolls, though.*

It just fits. Sometimes you run the risk of overdoing it. For this record I used smaller sized toms (10", 12", 13" rack toms, Pearl Master Custom with Maple shells), so they really cut through all the low frequencies.

You guys have been working with producer, Paul Orofino, for three albums now. I guess you like him. I think this is the best sounding IMMOLATION *he has worked on. Did you have any specific requests regarding your drum sound this time?*

I can't say enough good things about Paul. He is, without a doubt, a true professional. Like I mentioned before, my only request was the downsizing of the toms. We've learned a lot from Paul. Every record is a learning experience. I'd say we're a pretty good team.

You never go for that clicky bass drum trigger sound on the albums. It's usually a real drum sound, or at least a sample of your drum, right?

For live sound I use an Alesis DM5 that sometimes tends to sound a bit clicky, depending on who's working the board. I prefer not to record with this module, mainly because it's a 16-bit, which on record would sound clicky and weak. I really can't reveal Paul's secret recipes, though.

It really irritates me how a lot of people talk shit about triggers. They think that they make it easier for you. It's actually the opposite though, right? They give away all your mistakes!

There has always been controversy concerning the use of triggers. There're so many different ways you can mess with triggers. I use them as a tool to enhance my sound, not my playing. I'm still busting my ass. You are absolutely right; it's quite the opposite. It's very easy to detect fluctuations, especially with extreme music.

I think it's cool how you guys never really tried to be the fastest band on Earth and you just make sure the music is original. How do you work out the music at practice? Could you explain?

Being the fastest band on Earth is certainly not high on our list of priorities. Being creative is. Sure we're not the fastest band on Earth, but we're not trying to be. I didn't know there was a competition. It's really about the music, whether it's fast and vicious or dark and heavy; however we're feeling at the moment.

What about your setup? What kit, cymbals, pedals, etc. are you using now?

For touring, I'm using my one and only kit that I've had since I started playing 15 years ago. It's a Pearl Export, 12", 13", 14" and 16" toms and two 22" bass drums; a Pearl Jeff Percado rack from the eighties that I picked up soon after. I use Zildjian A Custom cymbals –15", 17", 18", and 19" crashes, an 8" splash and 14" stereo high hats, one from the Master Sound line; A Pig FX mini-china, an 18" china, a 22" ride and a 6" icebell. I also use DW 5000AH pedals and ProMark SBN natural sticks. You wanted to know!

What drummers have been influences for you over the years? What are you listening to these days?

Buddy Rich, Portnoy, Sandoval, Schalk, Lombardo and Ulrich, when I was younger. I listen to all kinds of music, from STEREOLAB to PINK FLOYD, though it depends on what mood I'm in. It's usually Mozart's Requiem on Sunday mornings. I could go on and on with this. You get the idea.

I remember you always having a practice pad on tour, practicing your rudiments. Did you have any formal drum training or lessons?

Warming up is important. I'm not a fan of muscle cramps. It's good to stay in shape. Being part of the music retail industry, I've learned so much. I watch, listen and ask questions. I've seen just about every instructional video, as well. I've never had any "formal" training.

When you play by yourself, what do you practice the most?

I like to work on a little bit of everything.

Do you have any suggestions for other drummers that are trying to perfect the style? I mean, you can't play the same way a rock drummer does. You have to be economical with your strength. What things do you think might help other drummers get their skills down more effectively?

Practice. I must have spent a million hours practicing and still feel the need for more. Dedication. Being a musician is a life long commitment to improvement and growth. Drumming is a huge part of my life. It feeds me, nourishes me and disciplines me.

END

NOTATION LEGEND
-slide into note -vibrato
(l.p.m.) -light palm mute V -down pick
-repeat

TESTAMENT

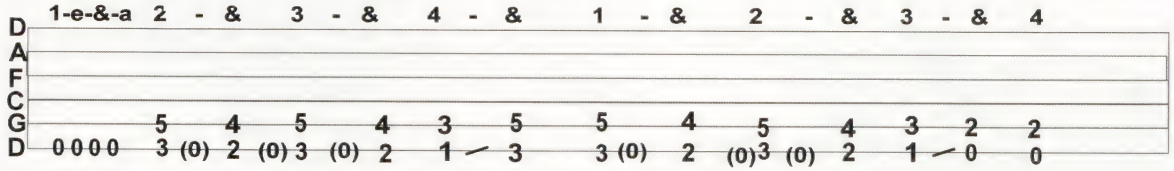
First Strike Still Deadly

"Disciples of the Watch"

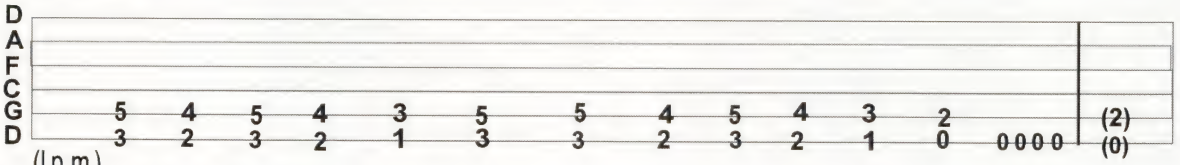
Design & Transcription by
Shivaji Shinde
- sh1vaj1@hotmail.com

(l.p.m.) Played on 6 string tuned D,G,C,F,A,D

Riff 1A Listen carefully to the recording for subtle variations in each riff!

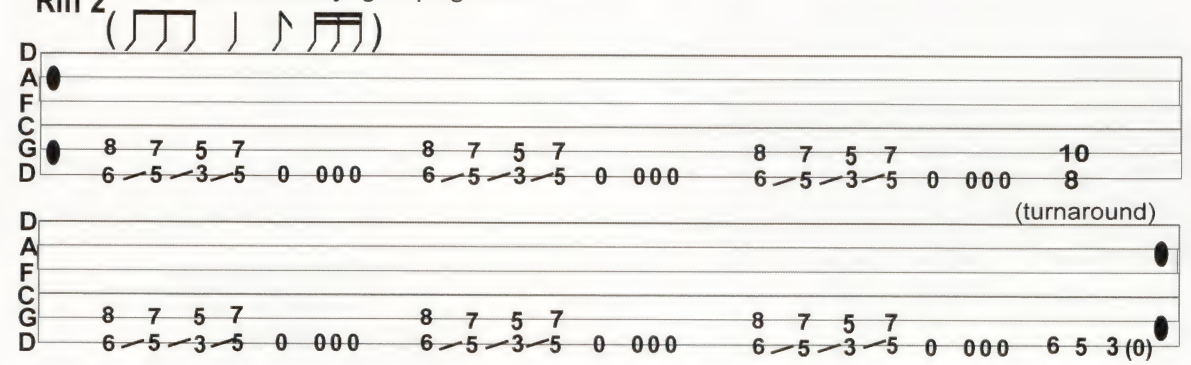


Riff 1B



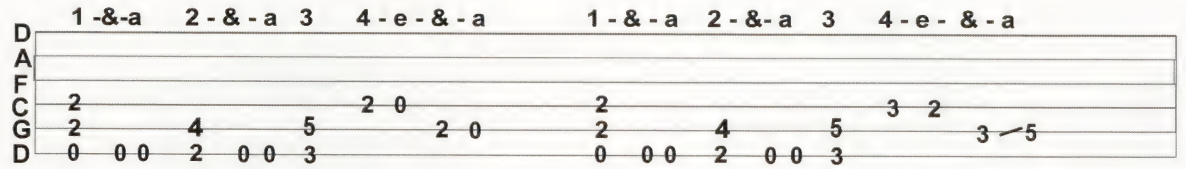
(l.p.m.)

Riff 2 Notice the thrashy "galloping" feel.

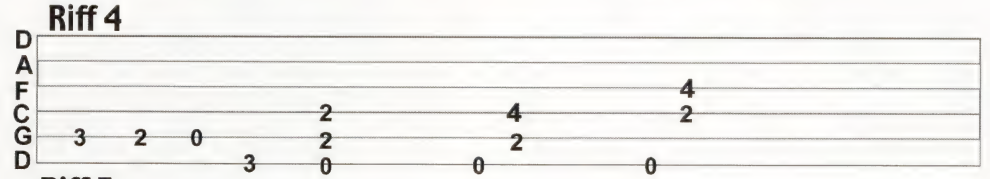


(l.p.m.)

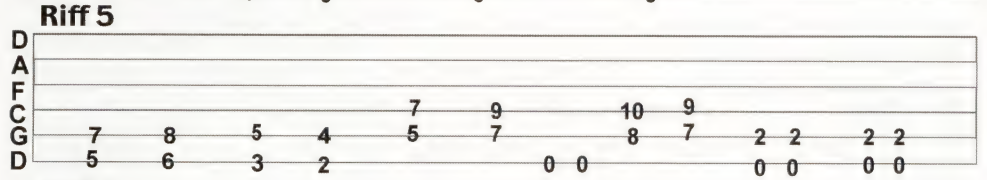
Riff 3



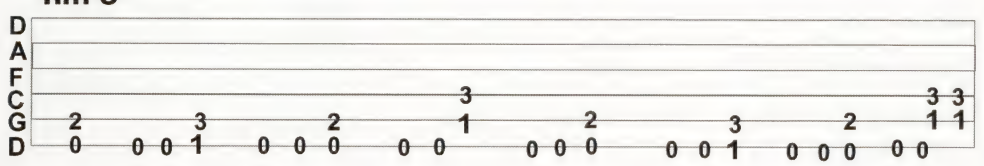
Riff 4



Riff 5



Riff 6

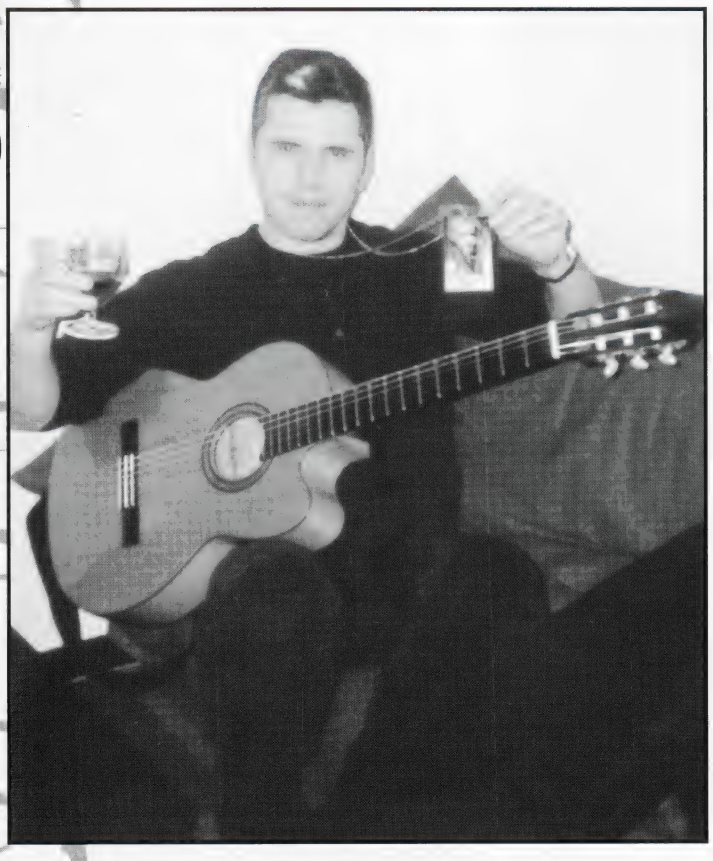


Layout of song:

Riff 1A 00:01-00:30
Riff 2 00:31-00:50
Riff 3 00:51-01:00
Riff 2 01:01-01:20
Riff 3 01:21-01:31
Riff 1B 01:32-01:44
(section omitted)
Riff 4 01:57-02:04
Solo Section (omitted)
Riff 5 02:57-03:07
Riff 6 03:08-03:27
Riff 3 03:39-03:54
Riff 2 03:39-03:57
Riff 3 03:58-04:08
Riff 1B 04:09-04:30

GUITAR CORNER By Micha Kite

Featuring Alex Skolnick



So, you've toured the world copiously, released the most noble albums in the annals of the underground and toured with all of your peers, starting in clubs and working up to arenas. What's next? There are two kinds of guitarists: rock stars and musicians. A rock star is someone who's only in it for the fame, fortune and women. Don't get me wrong, as we all would like a bit of that, but a musician is someone who couldn't put the instrument down even if it led them to the gutters and homeless shelters. Alex Skolnick is such a musician, even though he's far from the gutters or the YMCA, and after the celebrity status wore off Al did the one thing most of us should do: go back to school!

Pit: Some may be curious about your whereabouts for the last decade. First off, why did you leave TESTAMENT only to join SAVATAGE?

Alex Skolnick: Well, there was never a premeditated plan. I left TESTAMENT to get into improvised music, and I immediately started working with Stu Hamm (Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Ritchie Kotzen, etc.), which was before I left the band and I recorded with Michael Manring (ATTENTION DEFICIT). I was playing improvised music when I got a call from SAVATAGE to play on their record after Chris Olivia had tragically passed away. I was a fan of the band and the situation came up, and it made sense at the time, but they needed more of a commitment than I could make, as I wanted to get back into my studies. I'm still on great terms with the guys and I still work with TRANS SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA, which is based on SAVATAGE.

And what of the OZZY gig?

Ozzmosis had just come out and Zakk Wylde and him had a parting of ways for some reason. I was in London with OZZY and Sharon for about two weeks and we did the show. It was supposed to be the beginning of the tour for *Ozzmosis,* but they ended up working with Joe Holmes. I respect their decision, but OZZY had told me personally that I was going to do it, so I was a little disappointed. I'm actually glad that it worked out the way it did, because I can't imagine doing what I'm doing now if I had gone on the road for two years with OZZY.

Was going back to school like dropping everything you learned and starting over?

In a way, it was like learning a new craft, even though it was the same instrument. When you play jazz guitar, it's much more connected to other instruments. The chords have a lot more to do with the piano, and as a result, it's pretty important that you have a basic understanding of the piano. A lot of the vocabulary comes from brass and woodwind instruments, so it's like a different language, whereas in rock you have a language for the guitar licks and there's a similarity when it comes to classic licks, be it from Eric Clapton to Hendrix, Jimmy Page to Van Halen and even into more modern metal stuff like Randy Rhoads and Yngwie. It basically stopped after that in the '90s. I mean, rock guitar all but stopped with grunge. Everything was this whole back to basics approach and no one really took it further. With jazz I think the guitar has always been developing and there are guys now that are on the cutting edge.

Was it tough to shed the limelight when you made the crossover?

Not really. To be honest, I felt like the limelight was being shed on its own. The last two tours I did in the States with TESTAMENT we were opening for JUDAS PRIEST and IRON MAIDEN. These were heroes of mine in High School, and I had always thought that this would be a triumphant moment. It was actually disappointing because both bands were really suffering when it came to ticket sales. We were playing a lot of half-filled venues and the glamour of being in the limelight was being lost quickly. This was right before MAIDEN parted ways with Dickenson and right before PRIEST parted ways with Halford, so the bands we were touring with were going through all of this turmoil, and we ourselves were going through turmoil, which resulted in me leaving the band. Any glamorous aspect was gone before I left.

The transformation from an Ibanez to a Heritage had to be a trip. You're basically going from a long scale neck with a wide/flat fret board to a shorter scale neck with a narrow/round fret board.

It's like anything else. If you're working out in a gym and you start lifting heavier weights, it's going to be difficult at first, but in the long

run it's good for you. That's what it was like switching to a hollow body. To get the right sound you have to use heavier strings.

What did you go from? .010's to .013's?

Yeah, I was using .010's in TESTAMENT. When I first started playing hollow body I was using .012's, which took some getting used to, and then moved up to .013's. But when I play an electric I use .012's. A big part of using heavier strings is the sound, but it also has to do with feel.

You're doing something at the end of "War Pigs" that sounds like you're using a whammy bar.

That's actually my Les Paul, and the effect comes from one of those old flange pedals from the 1970's, made by ADA. It's a certain setting I found on the flanger where it just goes crazy and it sounds like Hendrix at Monterey. I've had the flanger for years and never thought I would use it, but with "War Pigs" I found a way.

So, you put the Ibanez in storage for the Heritage Hollow Body and a Les Paul Classic (1960 reissue). What did you trade the Marshalls in for?

It's a Tech 21 Trademark 60, which is made by a small company in New York, best known for the Sans Amp. It's a small combo, which has a clean and an overdrive channel, and I use the distortion from the amp. It's great because it's small and great for moving around the city.

Your tone, for the most part these days, is clean as can be, like I mentioned with "War Pigs." At anytime do you mix stomp boxes into the mix?

I'm using a few now for some songs that will be on our next release. I'm using something that's called Prescription Electronics "Experience Pedal", and it kind of sounds like the guitar solo in "Purple Haze". It has an overdrive, a volume swell effect and an octave sound effect. It's pretty nice. Other than that, I use a volume pedal and a flange.

I think the release of* Goodbye To Romance: Standards For A New Generation *is a great way to cross over your old-school fans into what you're doing now.

Absolutely, even more so than if I just tried to do a typical jazz album. Basically, the idea came to me naturally through a dream. I just decided to expand that into a whole CD and subconsciously, I'm sure I was curious about taking some of the old fans with me.

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IMMOLATION

BY JIM MILLS **PHOTOS BY FRASER**

IF THE NAME **IMMOLATION** CHANCE, YOU'RE A FOOL. DEATH METAL SCENE, EVEN HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE THE BAND FOR SOME YEARS NEXT, IT HAS SHOWN ME THE MONEY OR THE LAVISH AND YOU ~ THE CRAZY

Pit:* IMMOLATION *has been a hard, driving force on the extreme music scene for about 15 years now. What keeps the fire burning within* IMMOLATION*?

Bob Vigna: We are very determined and we love what we do. Over the years we have learned a lot, gained much experience, and have become better musicians, songwriters, and performers. We have matured as people and it shows in everything we do. We feel that our fullest potential has not yet been reached, and we are very ambitious to get there. With *Unholy Cult* we have created something very unique and original and we want to take this style of music beyond what people would expect from it. We still feel like we have much unfinished work to do, and that keeps us going.

IMMOLATION is now signed to Olympic, after departing from Metal Blade. Why the change?

Metal Blade was not really into the band and did not consider it a priority. We had the opportunity to leave, so we took it. We are really happy with Olympic/Century Media in the U.S., and Listenable Records in Europe. We feel the new CD will get the push it needs.

Do you guys find yourselves having an added spark now that you're on another label, especially after being on the back burner of the Metal Blade roster?

Definitely. We are very excited about the new record and the fact that we feel it will get the attention from the labels that it deserves. It's tough killing yourself time and time again, to do your best work and have no one else to get behind it. This time we feel that we will finally have what we've been missing all these years.

Was the band disappointed in the years that* IMMOLATION *was signed to Metal Blade?

It was more frustrating than anything else. They have good people working there, whom we are still in touch with today, but when you are only allowed to do so much there is only so far you can go. When those at the top of the label do not consider the band a priority, you get stuck and that's where we were for a few years. We had hoped that the interest of the label towards us would increase, but it didn't. So, anyhow, things are better now and we have no hard feelings about it. It's just another experience behind us.

Progressively,* IMMOLATION *get better and better with their songwriting and creativity. What were the "hopes" that* Unholy Cult *would bring?

We think this album has the potential to move the band forward. It is our best yet, and the press has been amazing with it. One step at a time we slowly move ahead. This is just the next step and I think it will establish us as one of the leading bands in this scene.

A lot of extreme bands use a "typical" song writing style, consisting mainly of blast beats and guttural vocals. How do you avoid this crippling formula?

We try to be as creative as possible and write music and lyrics that are interesting and have something to say. The more we put into the songs, the more people can get out of them and relate to them. When we go to write new music we do just that. We work hard to create a fresh sound and new ideas. If you lis-

LOOKS FAMILIAR TO YOU, BUT YOU'VE NEVER HEARD THEM OR EVEN GIVEN THEM A THESE NATIVE NEW YORKERS HAVE BEEN THE UNDERDOGS FOR A ONCE THRIVING IN THE LOW POINTS WHEN BANDS WERE A PLENTY (AND PLENTY TERRIBLE, TOO). I OF SEEING **IMMOLATION** TONS OF TIMES, AND EVEN TO WORK WITH THEM. KNOWING NOW, AND SEEING THEM PROGRESS MORE AND MORE FROM EACH ALBUM TO THE THAT THIS IS A BAND IN EVERY TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD. THEY DON'T DO IT FOR LIFE-STYLE (AS THEY ALL HAVE TO WORK). THEY DO IT BECAUSE OF THE MUSIC FUCKER WHO IS READING THIS INTERVIEW.

ten to *Unholy Cult*, you'll see that its originality is strong and its production is monstrous.

IMMOLATION doesn't write concepts about making out with Lucifer or ass-fucking a goat, however you guys maintain an evil vibe. Care to explain?

We like to keep things dark, but we do it in our own way. We question religion and expose certain aspects of it. The reality of these things is dark enough already, so we do not need to bring any of what you mentioned into it. The lyrics on this album are even more open to interpretation. They deal a lot with what is going on in the world today and can often relate to many other things outside the religious theme.

Bob, the kids want to know... what are you doing with your guitar when you play live?! I've heard that you're stabbing angels?

Haha.. well, as long as I don't accidentally stab any fans, we'll be ok!

IMMOLATION is such a solid band and it shows on stage and off. What's the deal with you guys connecting so well, and how important is it for bands to respect each other as people?

We've known each other for a long time. You need to get along with those you are playing and writing music with. We spend a lot of time together on the road and rehearsing, etc., so you have to make it work. It would be impossible to get anything done if we were at each other's throats. We've heard stories about bands, how they are in the studio and on the road, and it's hard to believe sometimes. The fact that we are tight makes a difference that people can see both on record and on stage.

You guys are laid back and genuinely nice people. However, this contradicts the essence of a band of IMMOLATION's nature. Typically, "evil" people (or whatever) are coined as terrible people. What do you think abut this stereotype?

People often stereotype you because of the way you look (in this case, our music), but I think once they meet us they see what we are all about. To us, it is about the music. We love what we do and we are into it 100%. Just because we create dark music with an evil feel does not mean we are evil people. We are, actually, down to earth and quite respectful to others. I don't care who you are or what you believe in. We are the type of people who will treat you as you treat us.

Obviously, money isn't a factor for the band. What keeps you guys dedicating all of your energy to the band?

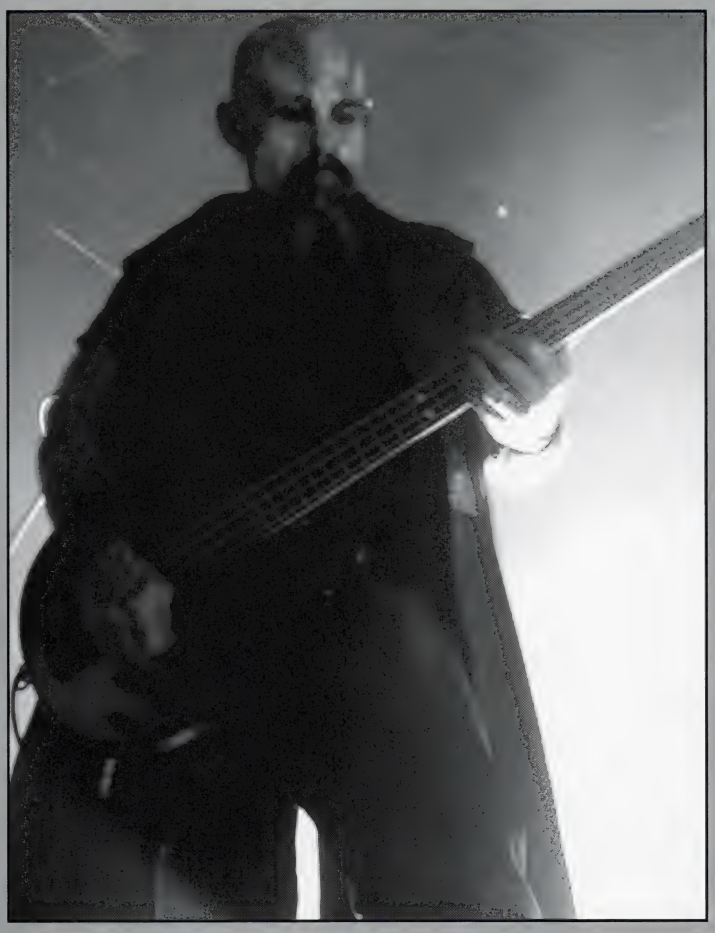
It comes back to loving what you do. We are into it and we enjoy recording, touring, etc., but I think we still have much ground to cover and that drives us to keep going.

Are there any lyrics that stick out from the others on Unholy Cult?

The lyrics on this album are the best yet. They are to the point, yet very open for interpretation. We wrote them to be more broad, that way the words can take on different meanings to different people.

Okay, Bob. Thanks for your time. I have only one more question. Now that IMMOLATION has played all over the world and met thousands of fans, who's your biggest fan?

The one that sits behind Alex on stage to cool him off!



BILE

BY ERRIN KLEIN

HAILING FROM NYC'S CULTISH, UNDERGROUND SCENE OVER TEN YEARS AGO, **BILE** IS STILL AT IT AND STILL GOING STRONG. THEY'VE BEEN DESCRIBED AS "POST-NUCLEAR, PHOTO-NEGATIVE OPERA UNDER A BLACK-LIGHT" AND I THINK THAT STILL RINGS TRUE TODAY. EVEN THOUGH THE BAND HAS UNDERGONE SOME MEMBER CHANGES THROUGHOUT ITS CAREER, THE CORE MASTER-MINDS, KRZTOFF (VOCALS/GUITAR) AND R.H. BEAR (BASS), ARE STILL THERE. THEY'VE RECRUITED A NEW DRUMMER, KEMP, WHICH IS SOME-THING BILE HASN'T DONE FOR QUITE SOME TIME. WITH DAVE S. ON LEAD GUITAR, THE BAND IS STILL PRODUCING EERIE AND HARD MUSIC THAT IS ANYTHING BUT USUAL OR BORING. R.H. BEAR SPOKE TO PIT ABOUT THE ONGO-ING 'TORTURE' THAT IS **BILE**...

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Pit: Are you going on tour soon?

R.H. Bear: Well, we're going to tour with PIGFACE, THRILL KILL KULT, and ZEROMANCER, and we're going to start on the West Coast... which will be a good thing. We've never really done a good West Coast tour. We've never toured with anyone. Well, we did with RORSCHACH TEST, but that wasn't really a good thing.

What have you been up to lately? You have a new album, is it out in stores?

We recently got a deal through Underground, Inc., which is a part of Invisible, so we'll be distributed through Caroline. *Demonic Electronic*, *BILE: The Copy Machine*, and Krztoff's solo album, *The Nightmare Before Krztoff*, are all new and out in stores… is that it? *Sex Reflex* is going to be re-released at some point. We're going to re-release all the early stuff so we'll have everything out.

Through Caroline again?

Yeah, everything will be through Caroline Distribution.

That should help out a lot; most of your stuff you've sold independently, or via touring, right?

Yeah, we haven't had anything in the stores since *Biledegradable*. We did some other deals with smaller distribution companies which got us into like "mom and pop" stores. But now everything's back out in the major chains. so people know we're still alive.

You have been doing this for quite a while. How long has it been?

Ten years. Ten years of pure torture [laughs]. Kris and myself are the only ones left from the original band, then we found Dave. It's not easy to find people who work well with me and Kris.

Why is that?

I don't know. Because we're assholes?

Maybe you're just perfectionists?

It takes a person of that mindset to work with this band and do music the right way. Krztoff really is a perfectionist. He knows what he wants when he's doing music. In Dave's case, he can just fit in well, and now we have a new drummer, so there are actually four people in **BILE** at the moment. It's nice to have a real drummer again. We have more leeway to change things. When there were only three of us, we couldn't really change much. Everything was stuck to whatever was there, all the drums were on mini-discs and stuff. Now we can make mistakes again and that's a good thing.

Was he on the album as well, or is he in the band just for touring?

No, I think he will be on the new album. We just got him for the last tour we did, and it worked out really well. It took us five years to find Dave; it took almost another five years to find Kemp and he's actually working out, so he will be with us on the next tour.

How will that affect your live shows, having a drummer to share the stage?

Everybody says it's much better. With our music, no one's really sure how to categorize it. I mean, it touches on everything, from dance music to death metal to techno, and I think people want to see something live; there's more to lock onto. Not saying that people can actually see anything on our stage anyway, you know. Usually, all you see are shadows and smoke, so we could have no drummer at all! I think in this case, we've lit him up more than we have anybody in the back before.

Is that specifically to show there's a live drummer?

Yeah, to show there's a live drummer, but we actually like him. He definitely deserves to be shown, he's an amazing drummer.

With wider distribution, how do you see it affecting the direction of the band?

It's getting the music out to more people. For years we'd show up on tour and people were surprised that we were still together, and we were like, "We never went anywhere!" Most people didn't know we were still together after *Biledegradable* because we sort of turned into this strange underground band that did things on their own. That's when we did everything on our own label. It's still on our label, it's just distributed by Underground, Inc. /Caroline. It's still Bile Style Records, so actually, forming our own label finally worked for us. It took a few years, but it worked. As far as the direction of the band, I don't think that will ever change. We're always going to stay brutal and nasty, or whatever people consider us. We couldn't imagine doing anything else. I mean, even if the album sounds nice, the minute we get on stage it will be completely different. It's more distorted, there's more screaming, and it's faster.

What do you hope people gain from your shows?

We try to make it as important of a spectacle as we can. I just talked to this kid online the other day and he was like, "Why do you guys dress that way and why do you act that way on stage?" I thought, Ok, I don't want to be a schlump in a t-shirt and pair of jeans. Neither Krztoff nor I have ever wanted to do stuff like that. We always get dressed up; we want to make it special. People pay money to come see a show. You can dress some idiot in a t-shirt and jeans and he can jump around and it will be absolutely nothing. You know, it's not something everyone's going to understand, but we really like to get dressed up and put on a show. It conveys the music a lot better.

BILE: www.bilestyle.com

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AMON AMARTH

By Micha Kite

Photo: Frank White

Photo by Kerstin R

Pit: As the band becomes older, wiser, and more proficient, how would you compare* Versus The World *to prior releases?

Johan Hegg: Musically, I would say we're a bit more professional now and our songwriting isn't so complicated; it's more straightforward. It used to be like we would use one riff, then go into the next one, and then the next one, and we never seemed to re-use a riff. We are writing more traditional types of songs which, I think, sound a bit more professional. We have also developed individually, as people, and grown from experiences that we've had through the years. I guess we're not as naive as we used to be.

Towards the industry or...?

Towards the industry and being in a band. When you first start you don't realize how much work it takes to become a professional musician and how hard it is to make it in the music business. When you're starting out, you feel as if anything is possible, which it is. But you have to work very, very hard to make those things happen.

***There's been a great deal of time and effort put into the deluxe "Viking edition" of* Versus The World.**

We wanted to give the fans something extra, since this is for our ten year anniversary. It's kind of like a birthday gift (laughter). We feel we have a strong backing from the label. We're very happy with the work that has been put into this album and all they've done for us.

The one thing I've always dug about* AMON AMARTH *is that while other bands change their style and imagery, you stick to the origins of your Asatru' concept.

The main concept of the album is that it's the end of the world in Northern mythology. We've taken bits and parts from the theme of Ragnarok and we've written stories about them. The songs aren't connected in any way, but they have the same ideas and explanations.

I didn't take it to be a concept album, but the themes run together. You said that the album has to do with the end of the world (Ragnarok), but I've also heard that this might be the last* AMON AMARTH *album.

We were toying with the idea that this would be the last album because, basically, we were tired as hell when we started writing material for *Versus The World*. We were tired of rehearsing and we had done many tours and that put a lot of strain on the band. We wanted to do this album and see how we felt when we were done recording it. We were tired of basically everything, but found new energy while recording the album and doing the American / European tours last winter and spring, so we decided to keep it going. It has a lot to do with the love of the music and it can be a lot of fun. I mean, this is what we love doing, a lot of people are interested in hearing it, and we are able to keep releasing albums, so I guess we will. But, as I said, you never know what's going to happen.

And this production is just the beginning...

Yes, but we feel that instead of this becoming the end, this is the beginning of something new. I feel that we have reached a step in our career where we are finally going somewhere. That's all we wanted and it was also one of the things that made us considering quitting. We felt that we were standing still and not going anywhere. With this album, it feels as if we've taken a huge step. I guess we all feel as if we're stepping out to go somewhere with this one.

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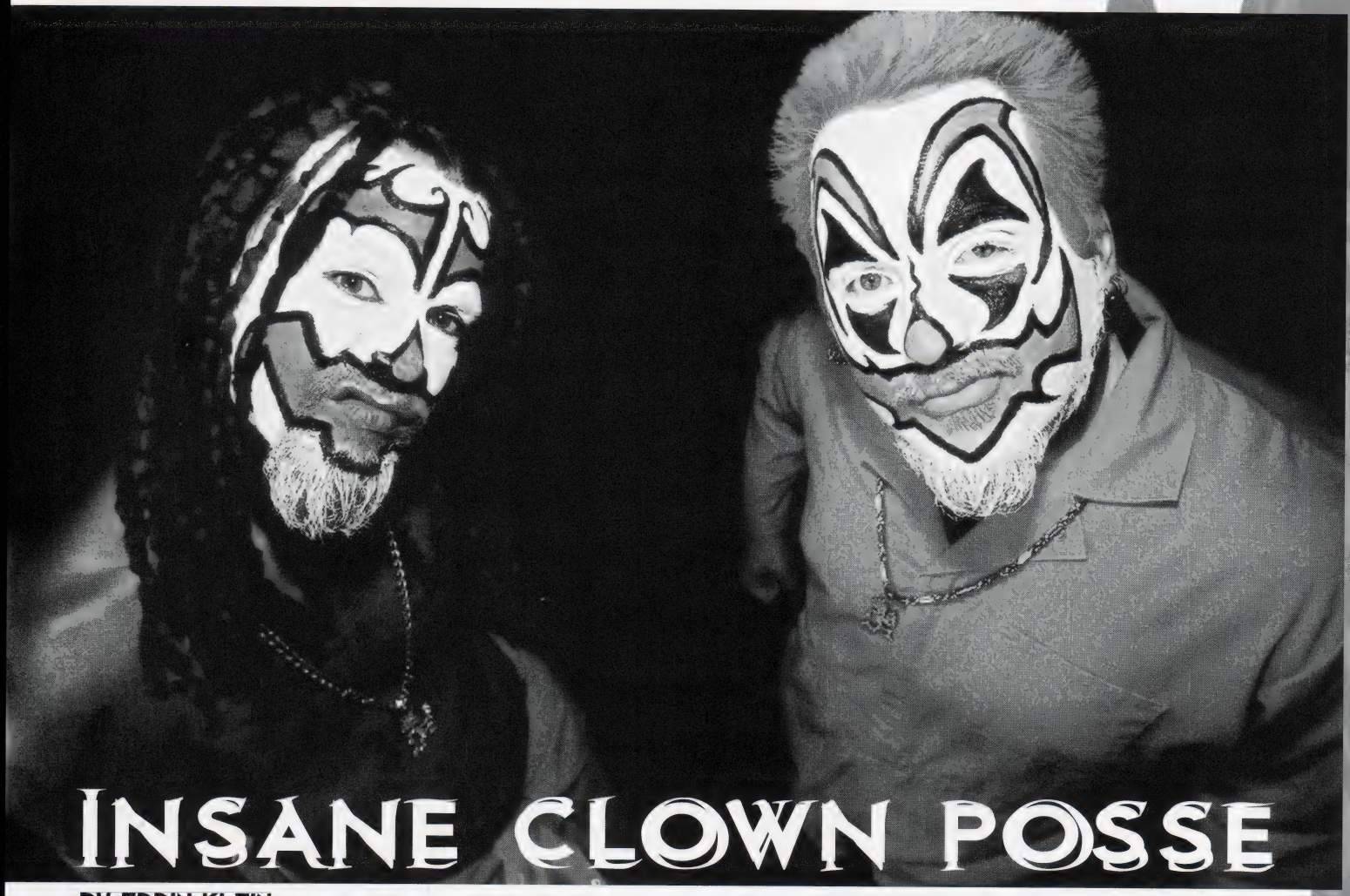


INSANE CLOWN POSSE

BY ERRIN KLEIN

VIOLENT J SPOKE TO PIT ABOUT THE ALBUM AND THEIR UPCOMING PLANS FOR THE SHANGRI-LA TOUR...

Pit: You have the day off today?

Violent J: Well,...technically. I'm not doing anything right now, but I never really have the day off, you know what I mean?

Tell us about your haunted house. How many years have you been doing it now?

That was our first time doing it, actually, and it was the stupidest thing we ever did. That haunted house tour—that was a bad move, man.

Why?

Because man, you know....We disappeared for about eight months when we did our last album because this is a really big time for my band. So when we finally decided to resurface after such a long time, we did it with this haunted house tour. In some cities, thousands of Juggalos were showing up, only to find that all **ICP** did was slap their hands as they walked through this stupid room, you know what I mean? They were like, "Damn, man!" They didn't even get to talk to us, get an autograph, or anything—not even a picture. Man, just a bad move... We're done with that, though.

So what's your next move?

The next thing we'll do is get on the bus at midnight tonight; tomorrow morning we do some press stuff, and then we do our record release party. We go to Boston, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and then we'll start our in-stores. But, check this out. This is what the best part is: it's not just J and Shaggy sitting at a table, thinking we're the shit and everything. I mean, we know that our mere presence isn't a fresh enough reason for people to come out, 'cuz we already screwed everyone over on that haunted house tour—we didn't even get paid for that. We had all of our management (not even our record label was involved) setting up so that we could make an appearance at the haunted houses and give out samplers from our new album. We thought we'd volunteer our time, you know? But then, some of those haunted houses jacked up the prices. They turned it into an event where

they were selling t-shirts and charging $25 for them! We'll play for an hour and a half, bringing three other bands with us, and only charge $25 for all that, you know?! Yeah, that was just a bad move… but that's over now [laughs].

Sounds like you didn't have much control over it…

Well, we'd just show up and we were making these haunted houses rich. I felt really bad because they weren't earning that money; no one was earning that money. It should've just been, like, five dollars to get in. We just should've researched it more before we did it, and we didn't. But that's over with. For the in-store tour, we have this whole semi-truck that was done up in LA; But it's not just a dull-ass, semi-truck. They made it into a fun-house where you go in through this maze of bungee cords and shit, and then you go up these little steps and jump into this thing filled with empty Fago two-liters! Then you go through this maze, but it's not dark and scary; it's all *Shangri-La*. At the end of that, there we are. It's something to check out because nobody's done anything like this, you know?

Do you feel that you're going to try to make it up to some of the fans who may have been disappointed with the haunted houses?

Yeah, exactly. We're going back across the whole country again, but we already planned to do that, you know what I mean? After we went into hiding, we came back with a whole new look. We wanted the haunted house tour to [reflect that], but they just got turned into these bad events. We decided to follow up that tour with the in-stores, which we're doing now, and then we'll do the concerts. We started out a haunted house, but now we're a fun house.

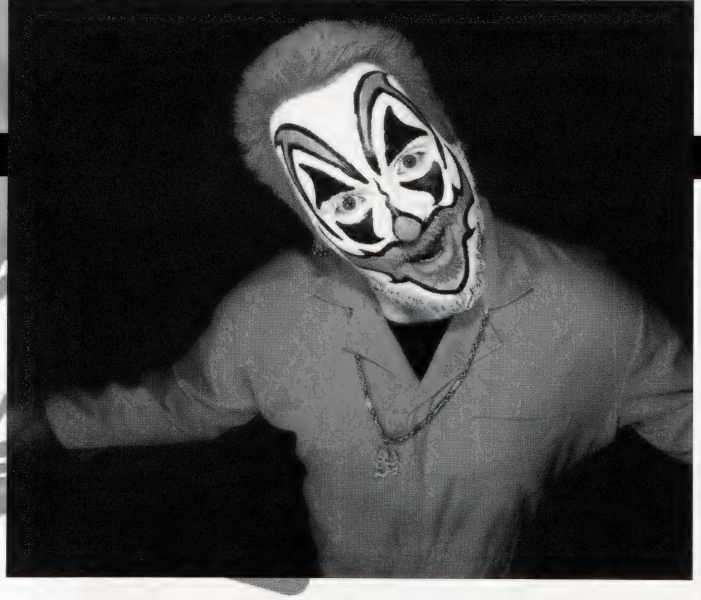
I think that one of the reasons you're so popular is because you connect with your fans; you care about them. It's nice to hear that you want to make amends for the things you feel have wronged your fans. Let's talk about what's coming up. Care to give us any insight into the new look and the new record?

Well, it comes out November 5th and is the sixth and final Joker's Card. It's the last chapter and grand finale of the only thing that **INSANE CLOWN POSSE** has ever done; tell the story of the six Joker's Cards. It's the end of an era, but it presents to us, like, 15 million options we never had before. We always knew what our next album was going to be called, what it was going to say, what it was going to sound like, etc. Now that we've finished with that story, we realize the sunlight of being over that shit and being able to do whatever the fuck we want from here on out. We look back at those albums and respect them like commandments in our lives. We don't even go by birthdays, we go by eras. We look at each tour and it's like, "Oh, that was during the Melenko era" or "That was the Ringmaster era…" We look at everything according to those eras, and now the whole countdown is about to be over with.

Does that scare you at all?

It's not scary because I know the ending to it. We did the absolute—it's not even conceivable how dope what we did was! I'm conceited as a motherfucker! "I'm so conceited." Let it say that on my tombstone, 'cuz I'm aware of how awesome what we did was. Over ten years of telling that story, with each joker card building more and more to the final message. Now the entire Juggalo nation is about to hear this message that they've been promised is the shit! Ten years! And we don't deliver half-assed, at all. If we did, *then* I'd be scared. We don't deliver anything other than absolutely perfect. It's like the T.K.O. knock-out punch from hell!

INSANE CLOWN POSSE: www.insaneclownposse.com / Psychopathic



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BY MARK KADZIELAWA

SYMPHONY X HAS BEEN MAKING ITS MARK ON THE POWER METAL SCENE OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. THIS NEW JERSEY BASED ACT HAS MADE THEIR NAME KNOWN ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND NOW THEY WILL FINALLY SPREAD THEIR GOSPEL TO THEIR AMERICAN FANS. WITH THE RELEASE OF THE NEW ALBUM, THE ODYSSEY, THE BAND PLANS TO MAKE ITSELF VISIBLE TO THE U.S. MARKET BY TOURING. THE GROUP HAS A STRONG CULT FOLLOWING, BUT THEY HOPE TO TAKE THEIR MUSIC TO THE BIGGER AUDIENCES.

GUITARIST, MICHAEL ROMEO, TALKS ABOUT THE NEW RECORD AND THE COMMITMENT TO MAKE THIS BAND RECOGNIZABLE.

MUSICALLY, **SYMPHONY X** IS A VERY COMPLEX BAND. THE TYPE OF METAL THEY PLAY IS BASED ON THE TECHNICAL ABILITY OF EACH MUSICIAN, YET THEY MANAGE TO PRESERVE THEIR SENSE OF MELODY AND FEEL. THEIR INFLUENCES DRAW FROM THE '70S AND '80S MUSICAL SCENES, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THE BAND SOUNDS VERY CURRENT.

"I guess the biggest difference with this album is that it's a little heavier. That was something we planned to do. Before we even wrote the album, we decided it would be cool to do some heavier stuff. We wanted the album to be based more on guitar riffs and sound more aggressive. So, that was pretty much the plan. As we began writing the songs, we decided the album needed a longer track, like an epic song. We wanted something with a lot of movement. We decided on the concept of "The Odyssey." We did a little reading, and put it together. I'm really into using that type of stuff (mythology) in the music because you get all types of mental images. The mythological creatures are always cool, and we enjoy it. Also, it allows you to get the orchestral stuff in there, so the music becomes bombastic, really big sounding. The album is a combination of things; it's heavy and aggressive, and has the epic component we always do. When we were mixing the album we decided to go for a very raw sound. We wanted to give the impression of a band that was right there next to you, not hidden behind the special effects.

Everyone I've spoken to, so far, is raving about this record. Could this be your big breakthrough?

We hope so. We're really happy with this record. It's probably my favorite one. We accomplished everything we set out to do, which is amazing, but for us it's just another record. For me, as a guitarist, it's great because the riffs are driving all the songs.

I was a bit surprised that you switched record labels from Metal Blade to Inside Out.

Well, we felt that Metal Blade had so many bands that we would be lost on that label. Metal Blade does a lot of good things, but with Inside Out, they specialize in the type of music we play. Also, I think we can be more of a priority for this label. From that viewpoint, that's why we decided to make the switch.

In many ways* SYMPHONY X *is still considered to be a new band, despite the number of albums you already have under your belt. How do you plan to reach all the kids who will probably like your music, but are not aware of your existence?

That's been a big problem. Most of the people who hear the band find something they like about us. It's just getting them to hear it. It's tough here. You see all this stuff that's popular on MTV, that kids hear and like. But for a band like us, it's not easy to get that type of exposure. It's hard to say how that can be done. We hope that when we tour we'll pick up many new fans.

When you weren't touring and your market was limited to Europe and Japan, how did you survive?

Sometimes it's tough. Some guys in the band have families and kids. For them, the band is definitely tough. They have to do other things on the side, like teach music. Things are definitely getting better, though. We do whatever we have to do. We're flexible. It's all about determination, and we're determined to make it happen.

You released a live album not that long ago.

We have always wanted to do a live album. We decided to wait and do one properly. We recorded some shows from the European tour. We were playing some nice venues where the sound was good, so we knew we would get good recordings. When we were working on the current album, the writing was taking some time. We decided to release the live album to give something to the fans. There were always lots of people asking us for live stuff. This new album should've been done a lot earlier than it was. It took us a while to complete it.

Yes, I see a lot of people exchanging live recordings of your band.

Yeah, you can't stop that. It doesn't bother me at all. If people are finding out about the band that way, then so be it. One thing that pisses me off, though, is the fact that people get a hold of our albums way before we do, and spread that around. That's simply not right.

NECROPHOBIC

BY MICHA KITE

ORIGINALLY BAPTIZED IN THE FIRES OF **MORBID ANGEL**, **TERRORIZER**, **PESTILENCE**, AND **CARCASS**, IT'S WHEN I FIRST HEARD RUMBLINGS FROM THE ALLEGORICAL SWEDISH SCENE THAT MY INTEREST BECAME INVIGORATED. ABRUPTLY, I SNATCHED UP ANYTHING THAT WAS SWISS AND PRODUCED AT SUNLIGHT STUDIOS. SURE THERE WAS FOOL'S GOLD AMONGST THE GEMS, BUT ONE OF THE GLORIOUS WAS **NECROPHOBIC**. IT'S BEEN TWELVE YEARS SINCE I WALKED INTO THAT UNDERGROUND RECORD STORE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND BOUGHT UNHOLY PROPHECIES. AFTER A STRING OF ALBUMS ONLY AVAILABLE AS IMPORTS, IT'S ONLY NOW THAT THE BAND HAS ITS FIRST OFFICIAL U.S. RELEASE, IN THE FORM OF BLOODHYMNS.

Pit: Do you feel the band got the shaft from the previous label?

Sebastian Ramstedt: I surely think we got the recognition we deserved, as we have a lot of fans. During the underground period, where people were tape trading, I know we had a lot of people listening to us. I don't know that it's so important if people buy the actual record from Black Mark, but of course, I think we could have made more money by having a better label. That's not the most important thing to **NECROPHOBIC**, as we just want to record our music and put it out some way. The ones who really love death metal will hear it anyway. But I will admit, with the new record out on Hammerheart it's much easier to find.

I guess what I'm getting at is some of the other acts, such as DISMEMBER and THERION, went on to bigger and better things and* NECROPHOBIC *kind of missed the boat.

Well, lots of those bands were on the right labels and got to tour Europe, and we didn't get to do that. I feel as if **NECROPHOBIC** has played the exact same kind of death metal since we started and besides us, I think it's only DISMEMBER that still does that. Both ENTOMBED and UNLEASHED have developed into.... I wouldn't say easy listening, but it's not the same music they originally started playing. I think we will survive by not compromising.

So, where does the inspiration and drive come from that makes one burn?

We're all fans of metal and good music. We like death/black/heavy metal so much that it's a way of living. I know if I wasn't in **NECROPHOBIC** right now, I would be in another band doing exactly the same thing because this is the way of life that I love and has been since I started listening to music. Of course, at first I was listening to bands like JUDAS PRIEST and MAIDEN, but I knew by the age of ten that I could never leave this scene. Some may think it's boring to never change, but I still wear the same boots and T-shirts and I'm thirty years old now. This is my life and I know it's the same for the other guys in **NECROPHOBIC**. As long as we can write good music we will carry on, even if we're fifty.

You don't feel as if there's a timeline, as far as age goes?

No, we will out pass it (laughter). It's a good thing to play death metal, as you don't have to be twenty to do it. Look at bands like MOTORHEAD, you don't have to look good to play music.

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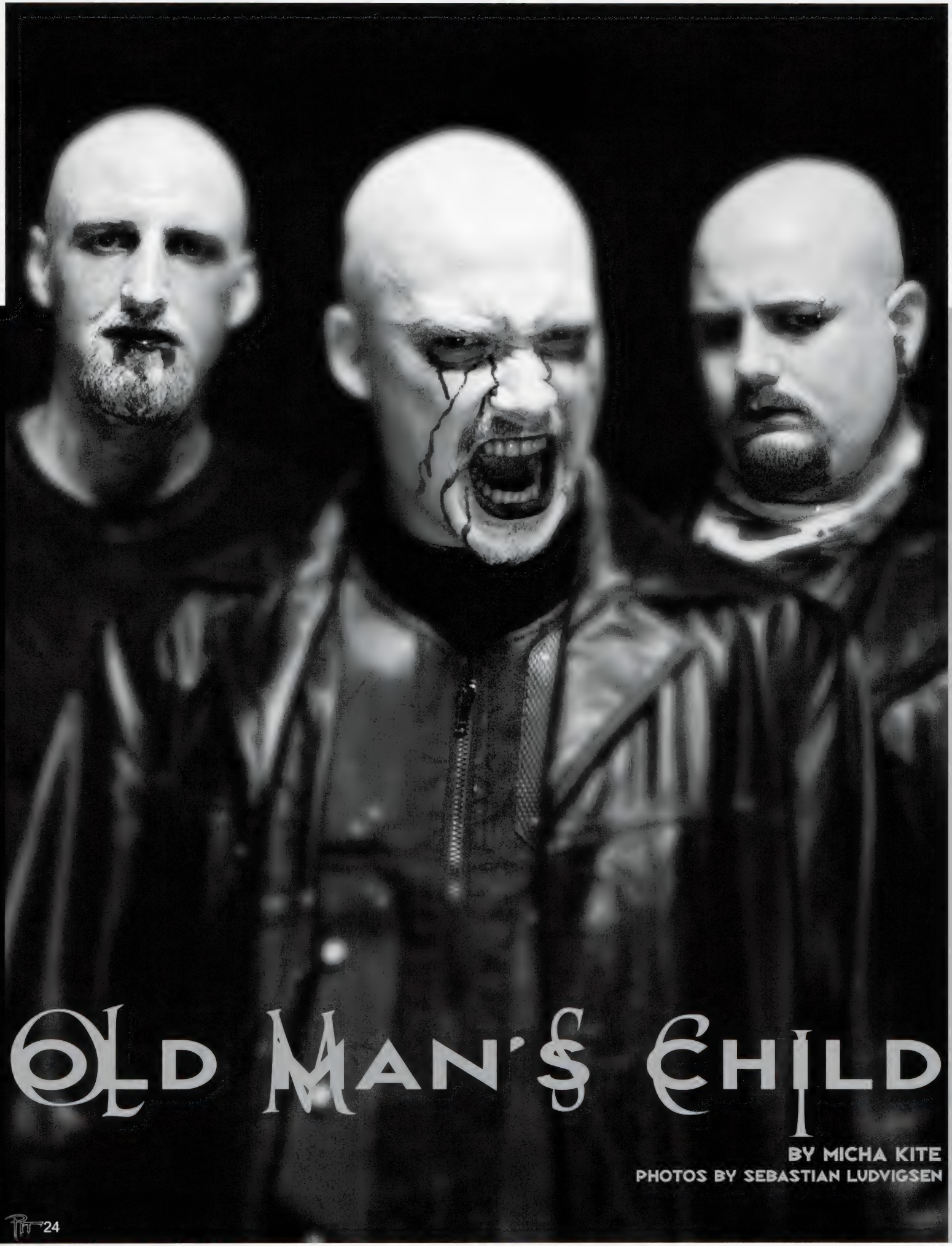

OLD MAN'S CHILD

BY MICHA KITE
PHOTOS BY SEBASTIAN LUDVIGSEN

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"PEOPLE CAN DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES BECAUSE I REALLY DON'T GIVE A SHIT".

Pit:* OLD MAN'S CHILD *is musically your baby. After the natural decision to produce it, why was it re-mixed?

Galder: The first version wasn't good enough and was too compressed. We had to go back and do the vocals over as well, so...

With that said, I'm equally as surprised you would trust anyone other than yourself to write the lyrics.

I won't do it again, that's for sure. The reason for that was I was very preoccupied with DIMMU at the time, but after that album was done I decided to write the lyrics myself. It's always best to do it yourself anyway.

Whom did you entrust to do the original versions?

I won't mention any names, not that you would've heard of the person anyway.

After the corrections, did the theme or attitude of the album change?

I don't think so. If it changed then it was for the better because no one knows the music better than me, or knows what it's supposed to sound like. I think it's a good thing that it happened. I have control of the music again.

At times, there's a cross-pollination between '80s thrash and more modern black metal. "Life Deprived" has some of the fastest blast beats I've ever heard.

One of the reasons I decided to use Nick on this album is because of the blast beats. The thing with **OLD MAN'S CHILD** is we always try to mix a lot of different styles in the music. There're a lot of SLAYER elements, as well as a lot of thrash, black metal and old heavy metal stuff. That's like the concept of **OLD MAN'S CHILD**: to be uncategorized.

You prefer not to be labeled as a black metal band?

I don't think it's possible. I see **OLD MAN'S CHILD** as a black metal band because that's the scene we've been hanging out in for eleven years now. Also, **OLD MAN'S CHILD** is a satanic band and that's what black metal is all about. In that way I see us as a black metal band, but not musically. People can decide for themselves because I really don't give a shit.

Would you agree that in the last few years black metal itself has branched out musically?

Yeah, it's not possible to do that same style for ten years because all the music evolves after a certain period of time. I think that if you play the same style today as you did ten years ago then it would be pretty boring and you would run out of ideas. You need to keep it fresh to make it interesting. I think a lot of bands do that and it's definitely not old school anymore. There are a lot of new bands out there today, you know, the next generation of black metal. I think that's necessary to keep it alive or it would die out I suppose.

Has the talent involved with DIMMU BORGIR rubbed off on* OLD MAN'S CHILD, *musically?

I don't think so as most of the songs were written before I joined DIMMU, but it's definitely good working with good musicians, especially when they write songs. I'm so used to doing everything myself. I can spend a couple of months on one song, but in DIMMU we can sit down and have a song ready in two hours. In that aspect it's been a very good experience.

***What are the pros and cons of bands like CRADLE OF FILTH and SATYRICON signing to major labels, and how will this effect* OLD MAN'S CHILD?**

It's cool for them, if that's what they want. The label that we're on right now is treating us very good so I don't see us changing labels. They can do what they want but it's not for us.

Wasn't this the concept of what black metal stood against in the first place?

Well it's trendy, as opposed to being on Century Media and Nuclear Blast, as well. But we want to record albums with good sound in good studios and go on good tours and we need to be on a pretty big label to do that. I mean, you can't be on a Norwegian underground label to accomplish these things.

To me, a lot of black metal has lost its aspect of danger but* In Defiance Of Existence *has regained those elements.

We try to create an atmosphere and still keep it technical. That's very hard to do because atmosphere is usually very easy to obtain. If I managed to do that with this album then my goal was reached.

DERANGED

BY RYAN BARTEK

FOR YEARS, **DERANGED** HAD ALWAYS BEEN ON MY "OBSCURE METAL BANDS TO CHECK OUT SOMEDAY" LIST. LUCKILY, LAST MONTH I WAS ABLE TO GET A HOLD OF THEIR LATEST ALBUM, **PLAINFIELD CEMETERY**. EVER SINCE THEN, I'VE BEEN KICKING MYSELF IN THE ASS FOR NOT GETTING INTO THEM SOONER. PLAINFIELD CEMETERY HAS ALREADY MADE MY ALL-TIME FAVORITE SWEDISH DEATH METAL RECORDS LIST, AND I'M POSITIVE THAT IF ANY OTHER TRUE DEATH-HEAD OUT THERE GIVES IT A LISTEN, THEY'LL CREAM THEIR PANTS AS WELL. YES, THIS MEANS YOU - GO OUT AND BUY ALL OF THEIR ALBUMS. THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED WITH **DERANGED** DRUMMER, RIKARD WERMEN. ENJOY...

Pit: Do all the songs on the new album somehow relate to Ed Gein?

Rikard Wermen: Not at all. I think there's one song, "Deviant Dead," that can lyric wise be kind of Ed Gein related, otherwise no. In fact, although we have never been that fond of the whole serial killer thing, a lot of things around **DERANGED** are pretty "Ed Gein-ish," we have never made a secret out of that. We took the actual band name from the movie "Deranged." Lyrically I try to keep it more fictional, as in horror and splatter movies in general.

How do you think* Plainfield Cemetery *compares to your other albums - do you think it's the strongest record you've done so far?

Without a doubt. I know that we'll do a stronger and better album next time but *Plainfield*... will do for now.

What are your current tour plans?

I don't know. It's a mess right now and no one knows shit about what's happening.

Will* DERANGED *be making a visit to the United States any time soon?

Hopefully. There've been some requests but nothing is 100% yet.

How do you go about writing most of your compositions?

It will usually start out that I'll have some kind of arrangements stuck in my head or Johan will have a new riff and we'll just go from that. We always write and work on new songs down in the rehearsal room.

What kind of equipment are you using right now?

I have two kits in fact - one Pearl Master Custom that is an all maple kit, with two 24" x 16" bass drums and I use three toms. Sometimes I'll have 10" x 10", 12" x 10" and 16" x 14". From time to time I'll change it to 12" x 10", 14" x 12" and 16" x 14". Depends on the mood. I don't use the toms that much and it would be enough with only two of them. The other is an old Sonor kit which is a typical '80s kit. Two 22" x 20" bass drums, 13", 14" and 16" toms and the shells are thick as hell! I think it's birch, I'm not sure. As for the snare... I have three of them right now and my faves are an old Sonor steel snare which is 100% metal. The other is an ordinary maple shell Pearl snare that sounds killer.

I guess the Sonor snares are like 8" deep and the Pearl one is 6 ?". I only use Sabian cymbals. Either Hand Hammered or AAX. The hi-hat is an HH as well as the ride, otherwise are all the crashes and china's AAX. 14" hi-hat, 16" 15" and 18" crash, 17" and 18" china and 22" ride. I use Evans heads. Frosted G2 on the toms and a Power Center head on the snare. Well, that's about it I guess? (Laughs)

What are you listening to right now?

The new ORIGIN CD!! It fucking rules man! I usually don't listen to that much death metal any longer but that fucking ORIGIN CD is killer! Great drummer!!! If anyone from ORIGIN reads this, keep it fucking up!!!

In your opinion, what is the next step of evolution in* DERANGED*'s extremity? Plainfield Cemetery is a very brutal album, but do you feel there is a way to trump the sound - make it even more lethal than it already is?

I don't know, man. I have never said it before in any interview but I think it's fucking hard to discuss the musical future of the band simply as we don't even know ourselves. When we're working on new material, we just write a bunch of new songs and that's it. We have never discussed in which way we'll take the band and will probably never do so either.

In your opinion, who is the greatest death metal band of all time?

SUFFOCATION!!! The Effigy album is the best death metal album ever!!!

What's going on with* MURDER CORPORATION *right now?

MURDER CORPORATION are split up! Johan Anderberg (voc. + bass) left the band and we were obviously looking for someone to replace him and we eventually hooked up with Rune, from RECLUSION. Rune has more of a brutal thrash voice compared to the singer in MURDER CORPORATION, which was a totally insane death growl. Plus, the new shit we had written for MURDER CORPORATION wasn't exactly what we used to do. It just felt like it was much too different to continue under the name. So we split up and formed a new band, KILLAMAN. We have a demo out right now. For any info people can contact killamannow@hotmail.com

Read any good books lately?

I'm reading one right now, whenever I have the time or can drag myself away from "Medal of Honor" or "GTA/Vice City." Anyway, I'm reading a book called "Eaten Alive" that's all about Italian cannibal and zombie movies. Hardly anything in it that I didn't know before, but a bunch of cool interviews.

Three favorite movies?

Tough one. Impossible to answer (Laughs). Well, three of my all time favorite movies would have to be "Cannibal Holocaust," "Star Wars" (the first one) and "Kiss Meets The Phantom of the Park." I haven't seen "Jackass: The Movie" yet, but I'm sure it'll rule!!

Where is the future of* DERANGED *heading?

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-Chris Dick -Digital Metal January 2003

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STRAPPING

IT HAS NEVER CEASED TO AMAZE ME HOW THERE ARE CERTAIN BANDS OUT THERE WHOSE OUTPUT WAS MINIMAL, YET THEIR INFLUENCE AND IMPORTANCE BECAME ALMOST "OTHER-WORLDLY." **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE** AND **EXODUS** ARE TWO SUCH BANDS. THERE IS ANOTHER BEAST OF A MUSICAL ENTITY WHICH FALLS INTO THIS CATEGORY; ONE WHOSE NAME ALONE IS ENOUGH TO INSPIRE CRAZED RANTS AND RAW DISPLAYS OF EMOTION FROM THEIR FANS. THAT BEAST IS **STRAPPING YOUNG LAD**. THEIR THIRD STUDIO ALBUM, **SYL**, IS THEIR FIRST COLLECTION OF NEW MATERIAL IN SIX YEARS. IT'S SCARY TO THINK THAT IT ALMOST NEVER HAPPENED.

Pit: This is your first new studio release in six years, but you've each kept yourselves occupied with other musical projects during that time. How does it feel for you all to be playing together again as* STRAPPING YOUNG LAD*?

Devin Townsend: Interesting. Everybody feels differently about it, I think. Some of us, including myself, are anticipating a lot of really cool things to come out of it. Everything I do is just another project, to a certain extent, you know what I mean? I don't want to focus too much attention on **STRAPPING**, entirely. At the same time, I think we've got something really cool going on and I enjoy it, for that reason alone.

You've often been quoted saying you didn't know if you would ever be angry enough to create another* STRAPPING YOUNG LAD *record. You must have had a pretty strong reaction to the 11th of September.

Well, I think everybody felt the same way about it. None of us have ever had to deal with war at home. Nothing's ever really started hitting as close to home as recently. It makes you re-evaluate your priorities, in terms of what's important in your life, right? I just thought, "Fuck it. Let's just do it. Let's just have some fun, see what happens." I don't know if it was necessarily anger other than fear, I guess…

You mean, your emotions behind the creation of the album?

Yeah. I think I was a little more afraid, and this is probably a defense mechanism to a certain extent, right? Just screaming really loud, carrying on. At the same time I did the new **STRAPPING**, I recorded a new solo record with THE DEVIN TOWNSEND BAND, and that gets released April 1st, or something. It's a total antithesis to what **STRAPPING** is…different energy.

Can you explain a bit of the recording processes of those two albums, being so completely different and recorded at the same time?

Well, I'm bipolar, right (laughs)? So it's pretty easy to separate it, you know? Plus, it's like the music stopped being so close to home, I started being able to go, "I know what I'm doing. I know what I want to achieve with the music." This is what I'm going to put across as a result of that. The recording of this one wasn't as emotionally draining as the other ones. The most emotionally draining part of making these two records was the actual creation of them. I sort of went on "autopilot" in the studio, and managed to get all of these crazy things out. It's only now that I listen back at it going, "Wow, that's pretty intense." The DT BAND record is super-intense too, but it just doesn't have any of that hatred or anything on it, you know what I mean?

Were Jed, Gene, or Byron involved in the creation of new music for* STRAPPING*?

Yeah, oh yeah, absolutely.

So, it wasn't just you writing the music, then coming in and saying, 'Hey guys, I have songs. Come learn them and let's do a record."

No. I mean, the genesis of a lot of the material is me, right? But what we would do is come in with a riff, put it together, and Gene would say, "Well, ok, maybe instead of just going like this, I'll do this." Then Jed would play the part differently, and Byron would write a bass line around it. Maybe there would be five or six riffs that we'd been throwing around, and then Jed would say, "OK, why don't we take that one and that one," and then he came in with the song "Relentless." Gene came in with the song "Force Fed." It was the same sort of thing. We had the parts and everything, but you know, it's just… there's always one main songwriter in a band, and then there're the guys who will write, as well, in all bands, right? So this is like the first time I'm experimenting with that, and it's working out really well. I think everybody's pretty pleased with what we were able to achieve.

You've always maintained that you would never do another* STRAPPING *record unless

YOUNG LAD

BY ADAM SAGAN

you felt you could top* City. *Do you think you've done that?

Yeah, absolutely, I mean, in a different way. It's a totally different thing. *City* is black; this one is red, right? They sound different because they are different, but it's the same idea, right? So it's like, "Did we top it?" Maybe it's not even a choice of topping it as much as just, "Is it the next step for **STRAPPING**?" I think it is, really. It's more stripped down, a lot more of a metal band, as opposed to the industrial-metal thing. But, last week I said I didn't like vegetarian food anymore, and then three days ago, I went vegetarian, right? It's like, I'm a hypocrite and I contradict myself all the time, so that's the only answer I'd have for that.

I had the record overnighted to me, so I've only been able to listen to it on the car ride down here tonight, to the show. My first impression is that it is a punishingly heavy album, with some very different experimental moments, even by your standards. The opening of the song "Animal" in particular, almost sounds like something you would do more with your PHYSICIST project.

Yep. It's what I wanted to hear.

This tour is an amazingly talented and unique package. What is it like, touring with such a diverse group of bands?

Every band is awesome. Everybody in every band is fucking great, and the crew too. NAPALM are just the coolest, coolest motherfuckers you will ever talk to, man. And NILE are awesome. Everybody's really hospitable. THE BERSERKER…I've known Luke for years. He's stayed at my house. He's a great guy. In terms of his intensity, he's got some really cool things going on. DARK TRANQUILLITY, we share the bus with them. They've been doing this longer than any of us, in terms of being a band, and they've got some really cool things about them.

How have your fans been reacting to the new material, considering that most of them haven't been able to hear it yet?

Great! We've actually received a lot of comments on it, which is probably a good sign. It's just like, after I finish a record, I just don't even care, you know

what I mean? Just react to it however you want to. That's fine, man.

Was it difficult for you, from a musical or personal standpoint, to come back to* STRAPPING YOUNG LAD *after all the other solo projects you've been doing?

Absolutely. That's why I did the other record at the same time, just so I could say to everybody, "I'm not *there*, really." I'm just doing this as a project, right? I'm just doing it for fun. But I've got the other one to sort of keep everybody that followed the older stuff a little more satisfied, so they're not like, "Well, he's just fucking doing **STRAPPING** now."

How would you say the other projects you have been working on have influenced the new* STRAPPING *record?

I don't know. I think, maybe, it's just a different work ethic: simplicity. I wanted to strip it down. I wanted it to be a metal band. I wanted to do metal songs. I wanted it to be like "Master of Puppets" or something; this really fucking crazy, decadent thing to listen to, that's always doing stuff that's interesting. There's always a melody or a blast beat or chaos, and it's all kind of happening at the same time, right? So, hearing that is just like an assault.

What are your thoughts on the state of the world today?

I'm terrified of it. At the same time, I believe what I believe and it gives me the peace that everything is going to be fine, no matter what happens.

Does* STRAPPING YOUNG LAD *have any plans, beyond the touring schedule you have?

Yeah, I think we might be doing Ozzfest, there was talk of that. We wouldn't be on the main stage; we would be on one of the side stages. Then, we're touring Australia and Japan with MESHUGGAH. We'll come back down to the States to do a bunch of stuff, we're doing Europe with THE DEVIN TOWNSEND BAND. Yeah man, lots of work. Lots and lots of work. I'm going to devote this whole year to **STRAPPING** and next year, I'll start working on THE DT BAND.

CENTURY MEDIA

CATHEDRAL

BACK WITH THEIR SEVENTH ALBUM, ENTITLED THE VIITH COMING. IT'S THEIR FIRST RELEASE FOR SPITFIRE RECORDS. AS USUAL, THE ALBUM OFFERS NON-COMMERCIAL, HEAVY MUSIC WITH A GOOD GROOVE WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT FROM **CATHEDRAL**. TO ITS MEMBERS **CATHEDRAL** IS LIKE A HOBBY, EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE MANAGED TO LAST THIS LONG AND HAVE GAINED A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF RESPECT. THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THIS BAND TRULY ENJOY WHAT THEY DO, AND HAVE BECOME QUITE GOOD AT COMPOSING AND EXECUTING THE MUSIC OF THIS STYLE. IT'S SORT OF NEAT TO SEE A BAND WITH THIS ATTITUDE IN OUR TIMES, WHERE EVERYTHING IS CORPORATE OR COMMERCIALIZED IN ORDER TO SELL AND SELL. VOCALIST, LEE DORIAN, SHEDS SOME LIGHT ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THE **CATHEDRAL** CAMP.

BY MARK KADZIELAWA PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE

"OUR ORIGINAL PLAN WAS TO RECORD A COUPLE OF SEVEN INCHES AND JUST GO AWAY".

Pit: You just released your seventh album, did you think it would last this long?

Lee Dorian: When we first started we didn't think we would do anything beyond our first demo. When we got together, we wanted to make some music that we like to hear and we still feel the same way today. We've never envisioned being around for as long as we have, though. When I formed the band, I had the idea of playing slow and heavy music, but I thought that nobody would understand what we were about. We never had any intentions to be a serious band. Our original plan was to record a couple of seven inches and just go away. So, this many years later, we can't believe we are still here. We still enjoy it and feel that we still have lots to achieve. It's a nice dream that came through.

So how does this record fit in with your plan?

We don't really have a plan. I know it's the oldest cliché in the book, that we make music to please ourselves, but it's pretty much true with us. We only make records we want to make. I guess you hear a lot of bands say that, but we really do mean it. We realize that the kind of music we play will never be popular, and we're never going to be mega successful. We're sort of the underdogs of the recording industry. I guess we had that opportunity when we signed to Columbia in the early '90s, but that was never our ambition. We wanted to do what we set out to do, and that's still our ambition. It's getting harder the longer we go on. I mean, the older you get the more responsibilities you get. Being in a band is kind of hard. You spend six month doing nothing, and six months being really busy. But at the end of the day, we still enjoy when we're playing.

Do you see the rewards from doing this?

Not up until a couple of years ago. Originally, it was kind of hard for us, I won't deny it. Our guitar player has a family with two kids; our drummer drives a taxi on the side, so it's not like we're very rich. We've done it for so long now that we know our levels of acceptance. We're pretty regular guys, but we have a strong belief in what we're doing, and that's what keeps us going.

The current line up of the band is the longest running yet. What keeps it so successful?

CATHEDRAL, as a band, have been around for twelve years, and the current line up is only eight years old and now outweighs the original band. I mean, eight years compared to four says something. I could list lots of reasons why some changes took place in the past. As for the current line up, we're mates and we know where each of us comes from. We know our capabilities, and our limitations. We don't live in the same city, but when we do get together, we make fun of each other and that's part of life. As individuals, we know how to bond and musically, we know where to go. We've been through a lot of good times and bad times, as well.

You're also on a new label this time around.

I was involved with Earache since 1987, that's a long time to be on one label. I mean, you have ideas and things you want to do, but you can't do them because you feel restricted by the label's profile. There are lots of reasons for wanting to move on, apart from the politics and the contracts. Essentially, we had a chance to be free and we went for it. It was something new, for a change. There are no violent, political reasons why we left the label, aside from the fact that our contract ran out. It didn't really run out, but we were in a situation where we could get out of it, and we wanted to. Hopefully, things will work out for the better.

It's been a while since you toured in the U.S. Any chances of bringing your music back to America?

I really hope so, it's hard to say. At the moment, there really aren't any plans. We want to get back to States because we feel it's been so long since we toured there. We're basically a live act. We have some plans to tour Europe and we want to include America in this tour, as well. We want to get back there. In the past, we've always enjoyed touring the States and we've made a lot of friends there.

THERE SEEMS TO BE A CREEK THAT FLOWS THROUGH HEIGHT ASHBURY, JUST PAST SPAHN RANCH AND INTO THE WATER SUPPLY OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DESERT. ACTS SUCH AS **QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE**, **KYUSS**, AND **FU MANCHU** SET A STANDARD IN MUSIC THAT COMBINES RAPTURE WITH WRATH. DRINKING FROM THIS WELL ARE UPSTARTS **MOUNTAIN MAKER**, **SONS OF SERRO**, AND **VOLUME**. PATRICK BRINK, AN ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE FU, NOW HEADS UP VOLUME. TO DESCRIBE THEIR MUSIC IS LIKE AN EXPEDITION ON THE BACK OF THE SNAKE MORRISON SANG ABOUT; ENVELOPING, FRACTURING, OBELISK AND RESPLENDENT!

VOLUME

BY MICHA KITE

Pit: You were part of the first wave, so to speak, of this thing some coin "desert rock." Why did it take* VOLUME *so long to get this CD out?

Patrick Brink: Well, we released two demos (*Heavy As Fuck* and *Love Is A Mountain*) and a seven inch (*Check This Planet I'm Gone...*). After [playing with us for] a year, our guitarist, Jason, was having some personal problems and took a two years hiatus. During that time, we were ready to do a full length recording but we couldn't find another guitarist. A lot of people think this is a big scene, but it really isn't. The people who are involved are either already in a band or trying to start one, and so it's hard to find someone in the little pool of people that are available. Luckily, Jason got his situation together and came back, which was really cool because **VOLUME**'s not **VOLUME** without Jason.

From my understanding, this is a trilogy;* Check This Planet I'm Gone... *being part one, and* Requesting Permission To Land, *part two. Where have we been throughout all of this and where are we going in part three?

When I envisioned this album, a lot of it had to do with the state of rock and roll. What the seven inch is talking about is how the world is headed for self destruction and we wanted to save rock and roll to preserve it. Basically, that's what we're trying to do. There's no good rock and roll out there. I mean, there's some, but the state of commercial rock just sucks. So, with the seven inch we're taking off to find something new. Now with this CD/ep, we're touching down to bring our show to the masses and we hope you guys accept it. Then, we're going to take over (laughter).

I know your background is punk rock, but vocally,* VOLUME *seems to be all about the '70s.

VOLUME comes from a major punk rock background. The guys from the late sixties and early seventies, like BLUE CHEER and MOUNTAIN, are my favorite vocalists. I dig that stuff; it's got balls and it rocks. Then, there are bands like BLACK FLAG, with Rollin's and Dkowski. We're like the angst from them mixed with the melody from the seventies. I have a lot of anger in me and this is a way to get it out.

The song "Headswim" is very implicative of something Syd Barrett would do. Were you tripping during the recording?

No, I haven't tripped since '91. The song's, basically, about my father's death and how I was feeling afterwards. I was having a lot of anxiety attacks and I was drawing from that. I was totally tripping during that period; crawling in a corner, calling my family, and kicking my friends out of my house 'cause I thought someone was trying to kill me. In the studio, I asked them to turn the lights down and if you listen to what I'm saying, that's what's going on. It's easy to draw from those experiences when I write our songs because I used to live that life all the time.

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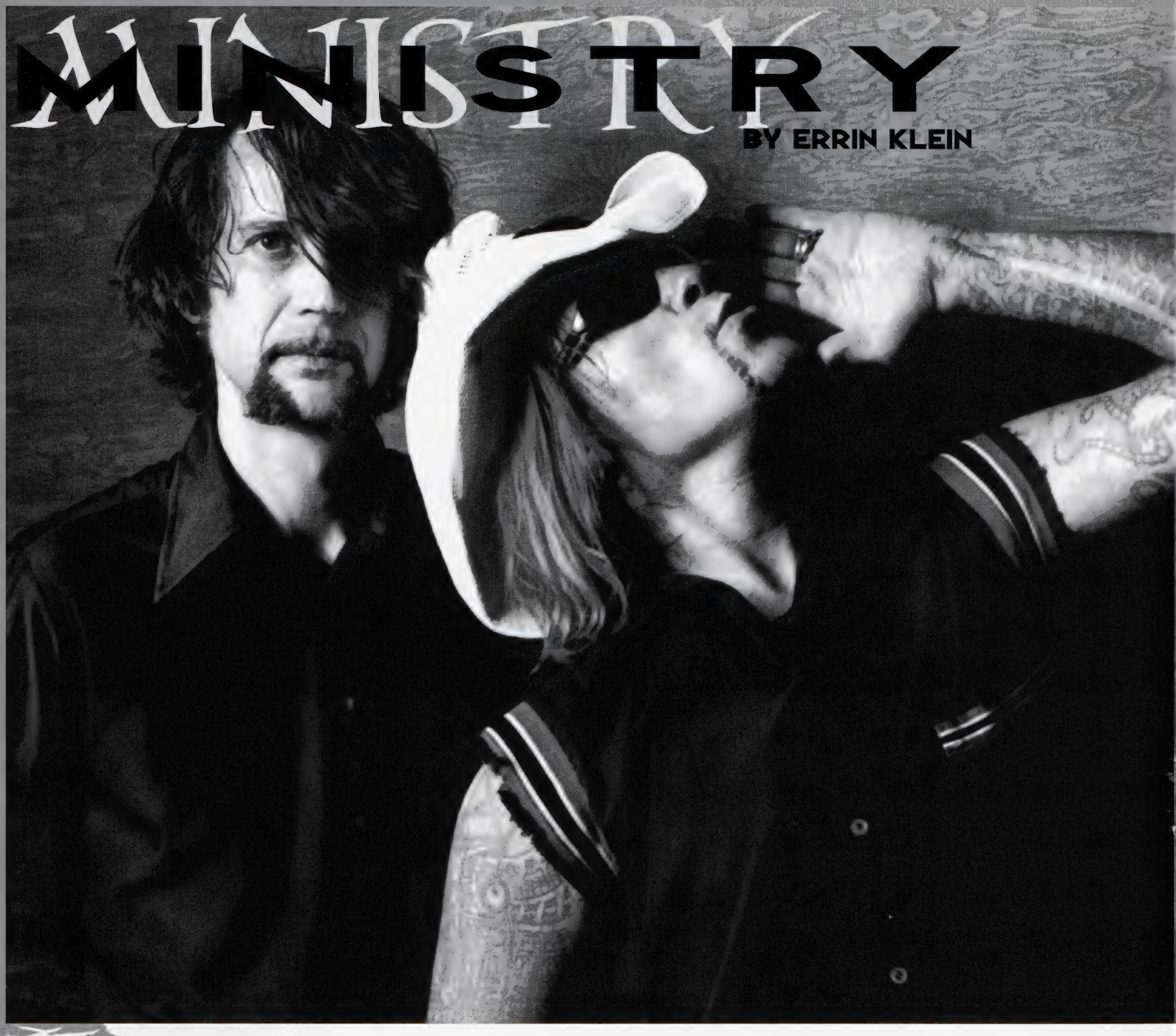
MINISTRY

BY ERRIN KLEIN



"I GOT PISSED OFF AGAIN!"

IS HOW FOUNDER AL JOURGENSEN EXPLAINS **MINISTRY**'S HIGHLY ANTICIPATED ALBUM, ANIMOSITISOMINA. JOURGENSEN FORMED **MINISTRY** WAY BACK IN 1979 AND FLESHED OUT THE SOUND IN THE MID-EIGHTIES, WITH HELP FROM MUSICAL PARTNER, PAUL BARKER. SINCE THE EARLY WAX TRAX! DAYS, THIS BAND HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL BANDS IN 'ALTERNATIVE/UNDERGROUND' HISTORY. JOURGENSEN NOT ONLY BROUGHT US **MINISTRY**, BUT HE'S ALSO BEEN A PART OF MANY OTHER PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE **REVOLTING COCKS** AND **LARD**. FANS WILL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT JOURGENSEN HAS PAIRED WITH BARKER ONCE MORE FOR THE LATEST EFFORT. JOURGENSEN SPOKE WITH PIT AS HE GEARED UP FOR A NEW **MINISTRY** TOUR, IN SUPPORT OF ANIMOSITISOMINA.

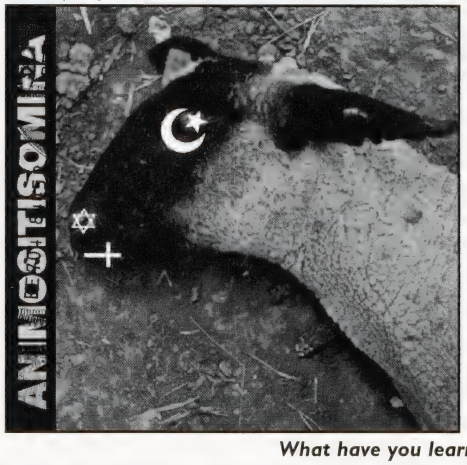
Al Jourgensen: So, what do you have for me today?

Pit: Well, let's talk about the album, what's been going on; this is a much anticipated album—what got you into the studio again?

I think the main thing that happened is when we did "A.I." [Artificial Intelligence], that Spielberg movie, we didn't really want to go to the 'dark side,' but when you get offered something by Kubrick, you don't turn that down, right? So that kind of forced us to get together to write songs for the movie, and while we were doing that, we were like, 'Wow, this is actually ok—we're working good again; this is fun again.' So we decided to go and do it a little different this time on the new record, because we wanted to make sure we kept that 'Wow, this is fun again' attitude. So, we went out to the middle of the desert and recorded there—away from cell phones and everything—and it worked out great. It was one of those situations where it could've been like "The Shining." You know, I'm just typing away, ("All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.") and choke [Paul] Barker to death, or we'd get it together and really have fun. It turned out to be the latter.

Where in the desert did you go?

About 40 miles outside of El Paso, TX, right by the American-Mexican border. There's a little studio down there called Sonic Ranch, and it's just awesome. It was perfect. When we went down there to look at it a couple of months before we went in, it wound up having almost all the same equipment as our studio in Chicago, so it was an ideal fit. Plus, it was like a spa down there. There're like 1700 acres that go down to the Rio Grande, and they've got motorbikes, horses, a swimming pool, weight-room, and everything else. It was like you just eat, sleep, and live music and if you need to get away from it, you don't have to go to some party in the middle of Chicago, or something like that. That just distracts you from it—you get a hangover for two days or something.



Did you have a lot of songs built up over the years?

No, actually, we just had a couple from "A.I."; the rest, we pretty much just winged it, there. I mean, that's what we're best at, really, flying by the seat of our pants. We find that if we go in with a lot of preconceived stuff, it's going to change so much anyway, so why bother to have it?

Was it the same people?

Max Broady put in a little drums and a couple singers—Angela Jourgensen, now my wife, and another vocalist. Other than that, it was just me and Paul.

What other things, besides* MINISTRY, *have been keeping you busy?

Well, we did the "A.I." thing, and that was definitely a trip. Right now, I've got about a million things going on. I'm working with LIMP BIZKIT and I'm also starting a new LARD album on February first, and we'll take it from there. We've also got five songs recorded for the REVOLTING COCKS, as well.

So, are you seeing a resurgence of a whole new creative aspect?

Well, there are peaks and valleys in anyone's life, and I had my valley, but right now I'm kicking ass, man. Just a lot of things going on again—just like the early days of Wax Trax! [Records]. I've got my fingers in about five different pies right now.

You've spoken about marriage—is that a recent thing?

September 6th, at Graceland.

Do you still call Chicago your home?

I'm living in Venice, CA, right now. It's nice; I've got a little studio in my back yard, so I can't complain. Wherever there's a studio is where you'll find me.

As far as the music goes, how would you compare the new material to some of your past efforts?

It's difficult for me to really take an overview, being in the middle of it. Ten years from now, I might be able to tell you my thoughts on it, but I can only tell you what other people are thinking right now, like trusted friends and all that. They're basically saying that this should've been the follow-up to *Psalm 69* —like *Psalm 70* or something.

When you're writing, what motivates you; what out there, in the world, is going on?

Just look out the window, man, really. Look out the window, *and now*, look in yourself. There are plenty of inner-demons and plenty of turmoil in the world, enough to fuel a quadruple box set. I just have to kind of pick and choose.

So, it's pretty introspective... do you feel it's cathartic at all?

Oh, it always is, sure. It's basically like your releasing things from within, and that's like the root meaning of the word. But, you know, it was especially cathartic for me because I went clean, and this is the first record that I've ever done clean and sober, which is great, because everyone says, "Oh, once they get clean, they puss-out," right? Well, this record is kind of like the antithesis of that. So, it's very satisfying.

What else do you enjoy in life, besides music—what else do you do?

Well, I've got a baby coming, and I have my birds... I'm an animal freak: I've got birds, cats, dogs, you name it, but my birds are my passion—they go on the road with me.

Really? What kind do you have?

Revolting Cockatiels [laughs], of course... One is named Sid Vicious and one is Charles Bukowski.

When you did "A.I." did you just do the soundtrack?

No, we were in it.

Oh, you were? [laughs] I never saw it.

Yeah, well, it's not that great of a movie, believe me. But, that's ok, we should've won an Academy Award for our *eight seconds* in the movie. [laughs]

Well, I know the song that came out of it was great.

You think so?

I liked it.

I wasn't so keen on that one, but the other stuff that that session spawned was good. We wrote that song directly for the movie, about that part; we had to write around that. It was a shared vision as opposed to a true **MINSTRY** song.

And you're not too hip on it?

It's alright, but you know it's half us, half Spielberg. It's just a little more satisfying when it's a 100 percent shared **MINISTRY** vision. I mean, collaborations are fun—I've done plenty of them, as you know. But it's more satisfying when you get what you want to say out of you, as opposed to only, like, half.

What do you want to say to your kid when it arrives?

Um... "breathe!" [laughs]

What have you learned that you want to pass on to your child?

Well, I have a 17-year-old daughter, too, so I'm not completely new to this... I don't know. "Take life as it comes," you know? Support when support is needed and take it from there.

If you had to describe this album in one word, besides the title, what would it be?

Uh, how about two words. They're baaaccckk! A photographer told me he wanted to do a shoot with me in a nightgown, in front of a TV, like the "Poltergeist" girl. Yeah, they're back.

Do you have a tour planned and everything, too?

Yeah. It starts February 16th in El Paso, TX. Then we go to Europe for a couple of weeks, and then we return to the States. We're touring for two months in the States starting March 7th in Buffalo [NY].

Tell us a little bit about the new stage show...

We have our sets built; we have our videos being done; we have probably the best sound-man we've ever had; there are seven people in the band, and it will probably be the loudest fucking thing you've ever heard!

Anything you'd like to add, to tell people?

Oh, I don't know... buy our t-shirts?! [laughs] I don't really have much to add; I'll let our shows and our records speak for themselves.

But you're happy where you are right now?

Oh, yeah, very. I'm Mr. Good-Vibes right now.

THYRFING HAVE, ONCE AGAIN, STUNNED THE UNDERGROUND WITH THEIR BRILLIANT NEW ALBUM, VANSINNESVISOR. TO CELEBRATE THEIR LATEST RELEASE FRONT MAN, THOMÄS VÄÄNÄNEN, SPOKE TO PIT MAGAZINE...

THYRFING

BY RYAN BARTEK

Pit: Is there a definite concept with* Vansinnesvisor*, or are you just further elaborating on the concepts of the Viking metal genre?

Thomäs Väänänen: Well, the title translates out to "songs of madness" and that's kind of a collective title for all of the songs on the album. All the lyrics deal with insanity, darker parts of the human psyche, and the behavior of mankind in general. We're still connecting to traditional Viking metal, but we're taking it one step further. Even though the topics we deal with can be found throughout modern life, we still use a lot of mythological and typical Scandinavian words and phrases. It's a new concept put into an old framework.

How did producer Daniel Bergstrand influence the project, and what was it like working at Dug Out studios?

Well, he affected it by making us frustrated, annoyed, and generally pissed off by calling us sloppy, untight, and bad musicians all the time. Honestly speaking, Daniel was like God to us. He's a brilliant producer. Not to sound down on the Abyss or anything like that, but when we recorded the old albums we didn't have any producer, just engineers. Daniel is definitely a producer, in the true meaning of the word. It took us two and a half days before we even started recording because we had to set up the drum sound. Daniel would listen to the snare drum for, like, two hours telling our drummer to tune it up or down every few minutes. He definitely put a lot of time and effort into giving us the sound that we wanted for this album. He's a sound freak. I remember this one time we were in the studio. He got the new BJORK album and put it on the studio speakers at full volume and he would just sit with his ear next to the speaker and go "Did you here that?" like he was being possessed or something.

I've heard that you made some of your own instruments for this...

Calling them instruments may be giving us way too much credit. We, basically, just went to a car junkyard and took pieces of old, scrap metal and hung them from the ceiling with rope. We took the biggest pieces we could find and just started banging on them and recorded it. We used that as percussion on a couple of songs. You can hear them on the last song when there's a lot of acoustic stuff going on. It's, basically, our drummer just beating the crap out of these metal chunks.

What are your stage shows like?

We don't have a lot of dressing up – we wear pretty much the same stuff you see in our photo sessions. We throw on some blood and some mud and get up on stage and bang our heads. Usually, I bring up a big drinking horn, fill it with blood, and throw it on the audience. It's nice when people come with white t-shirts on. I think the kind of audience that comes to our concerts are mostly younger people, like 14 or 15. The funny thing is that most of the people our own age, never dig us at all. Our fans are, usually, either much younger or way older than us.

Vansinnesvisor is very different from your past releases...

Well, when it comes to the whole atmosphere and attitude of the album... maybe it's a bit more black metal. It's darker, brooding, and more foreboding, while our older albums are much more... I don't want to say happy, but... Speaking of going into battle, it's like yeah, ok, you won the battle but everyone around you, even all of your friends, are dead. You're, basically, just standing there all alone saying "What the fuck am I gonna do now?" I think it's a step forward, since every album we've ever done has been a logical conjuration from the previous work. The worst thing than I can imagine is doing two identical albums. It would just be so extremely boring.

What are you listening to right now?

Actually, at the moment, the new BATHORY. It's an extremely brilliant return to form, since all of the last albums have basically been crap. It reminds me of *Twilight of the Gods*, 100 percent.

A lot of Swedish bands are starting to get a real breakthrough in the U.S. market. Is there a real feeling of excitement on the scene? How is this being perceived?

I don't really think that people back here have caught wind of the whole thing yet. They really don't understand what [the whole thing] means, with MESHUGGAH and IN FLAMES doing so well. Swedish bands have been going to the States for quite a few years now, but most tours have been badly planned and poorly financed. They're getting bigger and bigger all the time, but I don't think that people have really taken notice yet.

What do you think of the American metal scene?

There's a lot of cool stuff, actually. I'm extremely open-minded when it comes to new music. I like everything, from ABSU to KITTIE to SLIPKNOT. I listen to everything from techno and pop music, to old BURZUM and DARKTHRONE.

Speaking of BURZUM, what do you think of Varg Vikernes?

(Laughs) He's a fucking nutcase... he is completely insane. I mean, his old albums are brilliant. I can't tell you how many times I've been drunk and screaming along to "War" or the *Filisofim* album. But as far as I can tell from interviews, he's not only lost one or two screws, he's lost every fucking screw in his head. There's no doubt about it. There was some interview where they asked, "Do you listen to your old stuff?" and he said, "No, I don't listen to my old stuff anymore because it's nigger music because I used electric guitars." I mean, how fucking stupid are you?

Bare bones, strip everything down – what is the message of* THYRFING*?

(Laughs) We used to say, "Listen to **THYRFING** when you're feeling like shit, and you'll be ready to kick ass again!" or if you already felt kick ass, you'd be like, "Jesus fucking Christ. I'm just going to kill everybody in my way!" But I don't really know anymore with this new album because it's so heavy and dark in its atmosphere, I'm not sure it will be so uplifting. It's, basically, meant to take people on a journey with the music.

Where is the future of* THYRFING *heading?

One step forward, always. We're never going to do the same album again and we'll keep developing as musicians.

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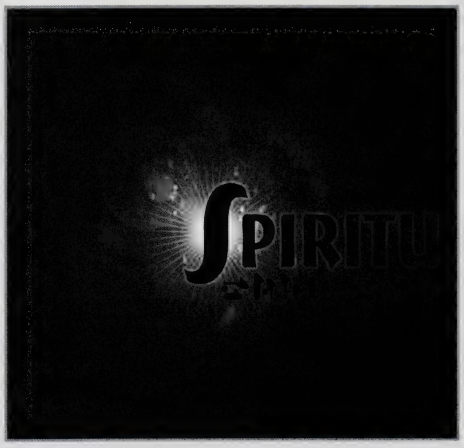
SPIRITU

BY MICHA KITE

For a debut album,* SPIRITU *come off as well seasoned veterans. Even more shocking is the fact that this is Jadd's (vocalist) first gig. "I kind of just fell into this. I've always sung, but never seriously. Whenever I would be driving around in the car blasting my favorite tunes I would always scream along with whatever was playing. I never even gave it a thought until the guys from IRON MAN needed a replacement. I had known one of their various bass players through Meteorcity and she said their vocalist had dropped out and they were leaving for tour in a week and a half. Jokingly, I said I would go sing for them and she said, 'Great, when can you get here?' I flew out there and rehearsed with them for four days and then we did it. I had never even been on stage. I did that for a month and when I got back home, I immediately started looking around for musicians I could put something together with."



It's obvious throughout the self-titled debut that* SPIRITU *has toiled assiduously on honing their timbre. "We definitely got rid of what was our first foray of songwriting. We recorded a couple of demo tracks. One was a bit too obvious, when it came to our influences, so we kind of kept writing. Eventually we went to the studio and we honestly didn't know how long our songs were. We knew they were long but we didn't know six songs were going to turn into a forty-some minute album. We were recording what we had and wanted to see how things would pan out, as far as using this or getting rid of that, and we were surprised to find that some of our songs were nine minutes long. We probably got rid of the first five songs that we wrote before we ended up with what we have now."

Not only is Jadd a musician, he also runs Meteorcity Records. With the pros outweighing the cons, it's not a bad business decision to self release your own album if you have the means possible. "I sent the album out to various people and I got positive responses, but no one really said 'this sounds good' AND 'we want to do something with it.' Being that I had always entertained, the possibility that I could do it on our label (which was not my ideal situation) was always in the back of my mind. I'm pretty impatient and since no one was really stepping up to the plate with anything I was like, 'To hell with it, I'll put it out.' I don't really feel like sending out hundreds of promo packages and waiting for things to happen. I just want to put it out and think about whatever comes next. I'm sure there are reasons why it might not be the smartest thing in the world to do, but I feel pretty good about it. I was talking to Wino the other day and he was like, 'you've got your own label and it's not like you started it thinking you would, one day, have your own band', which is entirely true. It just happened that eventually I started going towards the music that I wanted to play, myself. I certainly feel better about it since we've been getting some decent press. It kind off indicates to me that it wasn't such a bad idea."

EZURATE

BY RYAN BARTEK

IT HAS BEEN SAID BY MANY AN IGNORANT INDIVIDUAL THAT BEING AN AMERICAN BLACK METAL BAND IS JUST AS LUDICROUS AS A REGGAE BAND MADE UP OF WHITE BOYS FROM THE MIDDLE OF KANSAS. OF COURSE, THOSE DETRACTORS HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED THE VIOLENT FURY OF ILLINOIS' OWN **EZURATE**. FOR NEARLY A DECADE NOW **EZURATE** HAVE BEEN CHURNING OUT SOME OF THE RAWEST, MOST UNRELENTING, UNHOLY BLACK METAL THE US UNDERGROUND HAS EVER EXPERIENCED. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO ENGAGE IN THEIR MUSICAL MISSION OF ALL OUT NUCLEAR WARFARE...

Pit: Since you're new to many of our readers, can you give me a brief history of the band?

Tony Baron, Rob Knopf & Mike Hellstorm: **EZURATE** was born in October '94. The band at that time, before we changed the name of the band to **EZURATE**, was AMAYMON. AMAYMON was a new band started by a member from IMPURITY, Hellstorm, ex-vocalist Count Nocturon, ex-bassist C. Hamilton, and ex-guitarist Lord Captor of BLOOD THORNE. They had the completion of one song "...at the Shade of the Dark Weeping Cypresses" which was to appear on the very first **EZURATE** demo. From then on, we wrote/arranged/recorded/produced four more songs which became the **EZURATE** 1995 demo. The fifth song stayed off the demo, but was to later appear on our first album (later recorded in 1997). As for lineup changes, it was always a struggle to find other demons who've chosen to dedicate themselves to true black metal. To this day, we have worked through with many other morbid souls to come to what is known as **EZURATE**. As for myself, I was out of **EZURATE** during the entire year of 2000. Now, the current lineup is Mike/drums; Rod Leffew/vocals; Rob Knopf/bass; Tony Baron/guitars. Mike "Sir Dameon" Hellstorm is the only member who has been consistently active and involved in **EZURATE** since its early inception. He's been on every **EZURATE** recording.

What's the Illinois scene like? How is* EZURATE *perceived?

The scene is quiet right now. There are not many bars to play other than those shows that we set up. **EZURATE** is generally accepted. We get good responses by those who we've spoken with after our shows.

What are your stage shows like - do you go all out with corpse paint, chain mail, swords, etc. like your band photos?

Our music is of the occult. Our shows are a place to unveil our aggressions. It's ALL OUT WAR!! So we come prepared to battle via Pagan/Celtic ways.

What bands influenced* EZURATE *the most? I hear a big* DARKTHRONE */* BATHORY *influence...

BATHORY, VENOM, HELLHAMMER/CELTIC FROST, IRON MAIDEN, heavy metal, SLAYER, POSSESSED, SODOM – '90s black metal scene via Norway/Sweden.

Will you be playing the Milwaukee Metalfest this year?

Yes, Definitely!!

Is there a new album in the works right now?

We are in the process of completing *Glasheeon* - the working title to a full- length album that will be a split with (Mike Hellstorm's) side band, NIHASA. The NIHASA mini CD, *Dark Horror Metal* will complete the split.

What are some of your favorite albums and what are you listening to currently?

BATHORY – *"Bathory"*, VENOM – *"Possessed"*, SLAYER – *"S.N.M"*, and also MARDUK, ENTHRONED, and DARK FUNERAL.

Infernal Dominatio ***is a very raw album as far as production is concerned - was it all done analog without overdubs?***

Infernal Dominatio was recorded at a 24 track digital studio. On the new **EZURATE** recording the guitars are not as "Tinty," but clearer and thicker.

EZURATE ***has a very anti-Christian message - where does this root from?***

All of us live as individuals, not to be ruled by a lord whose religion made it a point to rule by means of genocide. We didn't start this war. Early in Celtic times the Pagans were stomped out by Christianity. Their ideas live on in our music.

Is* Infernal Dominatio *a concept album in anyway or is every song simply related by pure misanthropy?

The album was written in part by ex-guitarist Blackthorn. He, in part with ex-vocalist Count Nocturon & Noctis, related the songs more so by misanthropy. They were mostly about demons and archangels firing upon the heavens. Some songs are also about ghosts and the dead. Lastly, a song along the lines of the Salem Witch Trials.

What was it that initially turned you on to black metal growing up?

Porn, bondage and a submissive axe (Laughs)... Gotta have some fun here. These questions are so serious and all.... Seriously, the answer to the question is the music.

Read any good books lately?

A book called "Fats that Heal/Fats that Kill," by Udo Erasmus.

What do you think of the current world situation?

I hate the Pope. Its like every time he sits down and takes a shit the whole world stands still in amazement! How about Catholic priests and child abuse? WW3 is about us. Here's a quote from Sam Kinnison about the Pope: "He rides around in the bulletproof caboose looking like robo-Pope, loves god, hates crime, and is coming to your town."

Where will the future of* EZURATE *be leading?

Our future is like this - nothing absorbed, uncorrupted and unscathed by "FLU.METAL" (knocking nu metal) – "metal with the flu " or that which is sick and sickening the world metal. You can expect loud, brutal and evil metal music from this **EZURATE** regency.

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NUCLEAR ASSAULT

BY MICHA KITE

1986 WAS AN IMPLAUSIBLE YEAR IN MY LIFE. THRASH WAS SO CAUSAL THAT, UNLESS YOU WERE AMID THE VORACIOUS THAT DWELLED IN THE UNDERGROUND, THIS WAS CONSIDERED "DEVILS MUSIC" OR "MUSIC TO KILL YOUR GRANDMA TO." I FESTERED AMONGST A BUNCH; EARS OPEN TO EVERY NEW BAND THAT HIT THE RECORD STORES AND GAME OVER WAS ONE OF THESE ALBUMS. ALTHOUGH THE PRODUCTION WAS LACKING IN MANY ASPECTS, YOU COULD STILL GRASP THE UNDERLYING THEME THAT LEAD TO THE 1987 EP, THE PLAGUE. THAT ALBUM OWNED THE SUMMER FILLED WITH SKATEBOARDS, GIRLS, TRUCKER SPEED, AND CHEAP BEER. JUMP TO 2003 AND WITH THE REUNION OF THE BAND, SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE!

Pit: In 1987, if you would have told me that in 2003 I would be talking to you, I would've been like "yeah, right."

John Connelly: In 1987, if you would've told me that in 2003 I was still going to be playing this stuff, I would've told you that you're crazy. "I'm gonna be that old, you've gotta be kidding." (laughter)

Why is now a good time for* NUCLEAR ASSAULT *to reform?

It was just right. Enough time had gone by that we were all getting bored and antsy. Someone offered us a big gig over in Germany and since we were going to do that, we figured we would just do this, as well. There really wasn't any particular reason. It just seemed like a good idea.

I heard Anthony (guitarist) is already out of the picture?

Anthony is on the new live album, *Alive Again*, but he has family commitments which have taken him out of the situation. He can't go on the road any more, and if we record an album with someone we want them on the road with us.

Was it a hard decision to replace him, as this is a comeback of sorts?

Naw. This wasn't a surprise for us because as we were getting back together, he was telling us that he isn't twenty years old anymore. He has a good situation at home and wasn't going to be able to do this, so we knew this situation was going to come up. It's tough to reconcile going on tour and having a family, of any kind. Lets put it this way, this past week my wife got sick and ended up having to go to the hospital, one of our cats got sick and had to be put down. This all happened while I was on the road.

Had you worked with (new guitarist) Erik Burke previously?

Danny (bass) had but actually, I didn't even meet him until he picked us up at the airport in Brazil, to go to the show.

So is this a on/off thing, depending on how the album and tour goes, or will the band continue?

Well, we're writing new music. If there's enough label interest and a place for us to put out an album, we'll do it. When this tour ends, we'll take it one day at a time.

Any particular era of the band you may mirror?

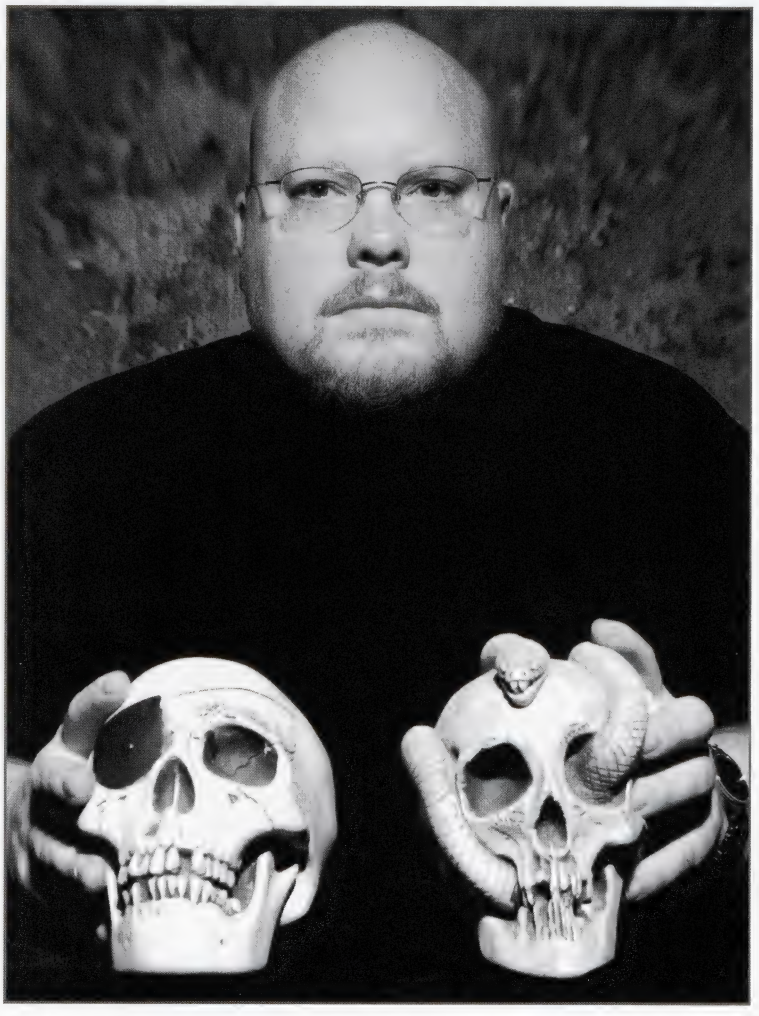
Its just, basically, **NUCLEAR ASSAULT**; The sound, tone and texture of the music. Of course, the key element is Danny and me writing together again. If I had to say it sounds like anything, I would say *Handle With Care*.

Why do you feel so many old bands are getting back together and, better yet, being received with open arms?

Back in the day, we all sounded different. EXODUS didn't sound like OVERKILL didn't sound like ANTHRAX, METALLICA, and SLAYER...I mean, pick one. You would go to a show with eight to ten bands, and not get the feeling that they were homogenous. Nowadays, it's hard to tell one band from the next without a scorecard. I think fans are starting to realize that they just bought six albums in the last two weeks, when they could've just bought one.

BRIAN SLAGEL

BRIAN SLAGEL BECAME AN ACCIDENTAL METAL VISIONARY. YES, IT HAPPENED OVER 20 YEARS AGO. ALL HE WANTED TO DO WAS PUT OUT A COMPILATION ALBUM, BUT WHAT HE GOT WAS A CAREER AS HEAD OF A RECORD LABEL. ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN, AND SOME ARE VERY FORTUNATE. METAL BLADE RECORDS IS CELEBRATING ITS SECOND DECADE IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS, AND THE MAN WHO STARTED IT ALL IS STILL INVOLVED. THE LABEL IS STILL RELEASING QUALITY ALBUMS, AND FINDS NEW TALENT FROM ALL AROUND THE GLOBE. BRIAN SLAGEL LOOKS AT THE PAST AND RECALLS THE EARLY DAYS OF WHAT EVENTUALLY BECAME METAL BLADE.



BY MARK KADZIELAWA

Pit: When you first began this venture, how did you finance the label?

Brian Slagel: The whole thing was more like a compilation record that came out of a fanzine I was working on. I had to borrow money from my friend and my aunt to get the 3,000 units pressed. I had no money, no contracts, and no lawyers, but the records sold out right away and everyone wanted more. I had no money to press more, so some other companies got involved and helped with the manufacturing and distribution.

What was the first full-length album you did?

The first album we did was *Be My Slave,* by BITCH. We did a few mini albums, but that was the initial start.

When did you realize that you would go into the music business full time?

Once I got the distribution deal it started to get bigger. I was still working at the record store and doing the fanzine, going to school, and booking shows. After I put out about five releases, I started seriously thinking about it. I went to tell my mom that I was taking a semester off from school. I though she was gonna kill me, but she was cool about it. I never went back to school.

What would you say was the peak of your career, especially in the early '80s?

It's hard to say. I feel that as a label, we've been very consistent over the years. The whole metal movement peaked around 1988. We had some problems because Enigma, who was our distributor at the time, went bankrupt. Everything from 1982 to 1987 was very new and exciting and many bands started to sign to majors. At that point, we had many releases coming out.

Do you have any personal favorites?

I've always liked everything. I love the records we did by TROUBLE, FATES WARNING, SLAYER, OMEN, LIZZY BORDEN, and FLOTSAM. I mean, all these bands were friends of mine and they were great. I could go on and on. I'm still a big music fan, and to have been able to release some of these records was great.

Did the business aspect of the label ever take away the fun?

Sure it did, but I've been lucky over the years. It wasn't so bad for me. I mean, I had to learn about everything by being involved in it. I was a young kid who knew nothing. At times it could be very frustrating when the business aspect got in the way, but I always remained a fan of the music and that kept me going. Any brick wall I hit, I would recover from; pick up the pieces and keep going, and it never really got me too down. So much of the music industry is about the business aspect. Luckily, I took some business classes while still in college.

How do you go about finding new acts these days?

It hasn't changed that much. Obviously, as we became a bigger label more people got involved. It's still the same way: a band starts getting popular in one area, we hear about them, check them out, and if we like them, we make an offer. Also, we have a company out in Europe that helps attract new bands. People send me stuff all the time.

Were there ever any releases you had high hopes for but they never really translated into sales?

It's hard to explain this because we're dealing with art here. I like everything I release. Most of my personal favorite records on the label, and on other labels, never really sold well. Early on, we had a band called SOUND BARRIER. We released a great album by them in 1987, but it didn't do so well. Even a band like ARMORED SAINT should've been much bigger than they ever got to be. More recently, GALACTIC COWBOYS, which I absolutely love. We spent a lot of time on them, but they proved to be too strange for everyone else's tastes.

On the other hand, any surprises?

The biggest surprise was the GOO GOO DOLLS and how big they got over the years. They started out as this crazy, punk band. Back in the early days, no one knew these bands would become as big as they did, or that any of them would still be around. There are many bands that are still as good today as they were back then.

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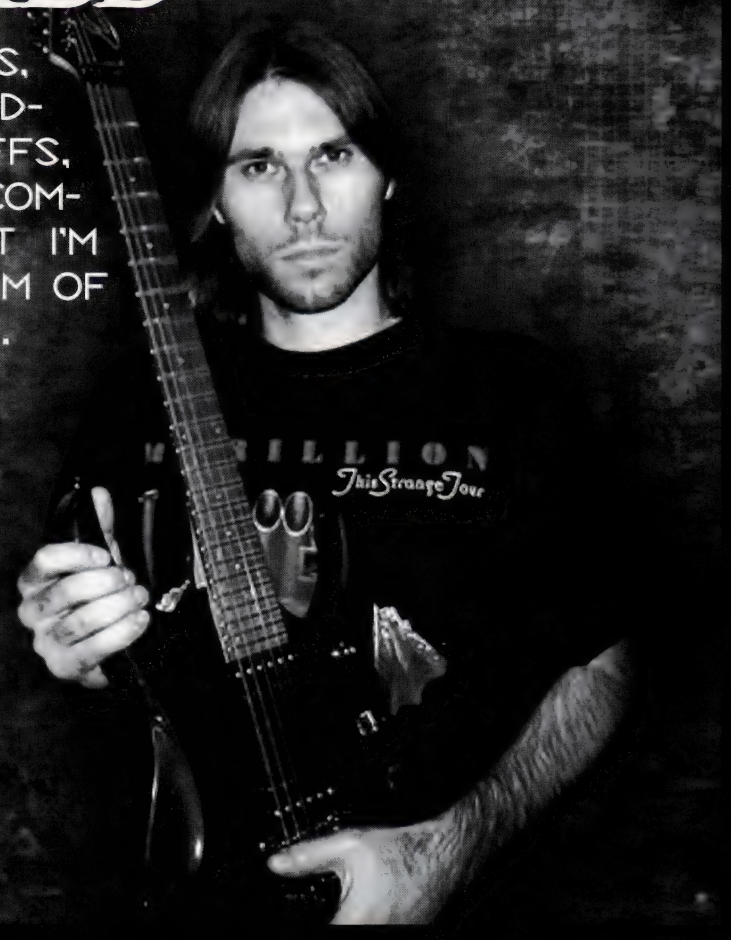

Pit: First off, how did you initially want to approach* Alive Again, *musically? Is the finished result better than your expectations?

Dan Swano: Yeah. I think the album really stands the test of time. A lot of the songs are really old and have been with me for quite some time now. Normally, I'd be halfway through writing the follow-up by now. But I kind of emptied all my pockets for this one and kept re-writing and adding up new ideas to the existing tracks in order to shape them up as much as possible.

How do you feel it compares to your other albums?

The sound is way better and so is the playing. The songs are good and a bit different from the other albums. I think there are tracks on other albums that kicks some of the tracks on this new one, but that's the way it's always been. Hopefully the fans will dig it as much as the other three.

What are some of the topics dealt with in the songs and what is the overall theme of* Alive Again*?

Musically, it is writing the best song possible and be true to your own gut feeling. Lyrically, it is even more complex and bizarre than "Twin Peaks."

How did the majority of the compositions come together? Was it a fully democratic effort?

Very undemocratic. It's like "Don't touch my track and I won't touch yours!!" My brother and I are like two painters sharing an exhibition. It's his art and mine, mixed up but not blended together, except for the track "Eternal," where I have used some of my brothers ideas from 1981!!

How have fan/press reactions been so far?

Overwhelming. I just saw another 8.5 out of 10 review today and it really warms me up in the cold of Sweden! I never really care about the reviews once I am a strong believer in the album. Some of the albums I have done throughout the years have been more or less tailor-made for a specific audience (Like the first **NIGHTINGALE** was a Goth-flirt, the INFESTDEAD albums a bit like DEICIDE and BLOODBATH - a tribute to ancient death sounds) and this is where I look at the reviews too see if my product worked or not. With *Alive Again* I am happy to see that people are reacting to the album and that it's been distributed to the mags!! I know what I like and I like *Alive Again*, no bad review can ever change that.

Will you be touring soon?

Not really. We need to see where the album goes first. If we sell like 100,000 copies we will most likely be dragged out of our beds in the middle of the night and put on a tour bus... but if nothing happens, no touring, sorry!

What is the current status of your side project activities? How many bands are you participating in right now?

Just **NIGHTINGALE**. I have a project on the side called SECOND SKY where I use all the songs

that are too commercial for **NIGHTINGALE**. SECOND SKY might release something someday!!

What are you listening to right now?

The MP3s that I will put out on my web page in a few months. A bunch of mega-rare stuff from EDGE OF SANITY, **NIGHTINGALE**, UNICORN and zillions of old projects of mine that never made it past the first demo! My walkman had RUSH's *Hold Your Fire* on repeat all day while reading the John Wetton biography… great day!!

Any bands impress you in the underground lately?

The upcoming KATATONIA album has a lot of good moments. I listen to a lot of old records from the '80s-'90s these days. I don't have enough time to listen to the current scene.

In your opinion, what is the best guitar solo of all time, or at least one of your favorites?

MARILLION's "Easter," no competition.

What do you think of the current world situation?

Not too cool. I have sensed the end of humanity far too many times in the last ten years. I really thought the twin tower thing would trigger a massive world war, but luckily it didn't… yet.

***Bare bones, strip everything down – what is the message of* NIGHTINGALE?**

To write the music we feel is missing from the record shelves of today and, of course, to have a good time and escape from our daily lives for a few hours every day, to be the biggest band in the world and all that.

What's the last good book you've read?

I read "The Dirt" from MOTLEY CRUE once more, a book about Freddie Mercury that was real cool and I have almost finished John Wetton's biography, "My Own Time"

Where is the future of* NIGHTINGALE *leading?

Rehearsal on Sunday. We are really taking things slow here!!! Enjoying every second this line-up is together!!

The End Records

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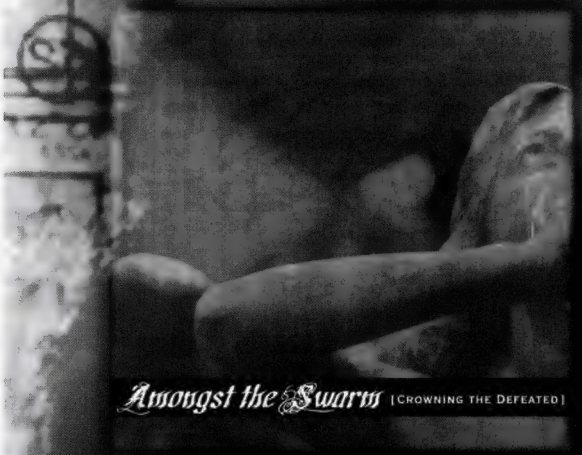

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Pit: Congratulations on creating one of the best metal albums of the year! Are you satisfied with the way* The Will To Kill *turned out?

Phil Fasciana: Yeah! We finally had a good producer to work with us and mix our new album. Jean-Francois Dagenais, from KATAKLYSM, did an amazing job! We've finally found a producer that can bring our music to life! We're happy with it, and we're really looking forward to recording our next album with him.

I was just about to say that the sound on* The Will To Kill *is, easily, the best sound of any album you have ever done. I was curious how the collaboration between you came about.

We met a long time ago, probably back in 1992. We did a tour with those guys earlier this year and I mentioned how good the KATAKLYSM record sounded. I asked who produced them, and it was him! I was like, "Man, you have to record our new album!" He said, "If I do your new album, it will be the heaviest album you guys ever put out." We went, "It's alright, it's a deal!" We had problems getting him into the States and we had to record without him. Fortunately, we were able to get him down there for the mix. We were totally blown away by what he had done. After he mixed it, it was like, "Oh my God, we're fucking HEAVY!"

Was there any worry, before he got down there and started tweaking it, that maybe you guys WOULD have to re-record it?

We didn't know if it was going to come out right, because we were kind of thrown into the melting pot with an assistant engineer who works at the studio. He was coming to open the doors for us and the next thing you know, he's recording a **MALEVOLENT** album (laughs)! He was easy to work with. We just worked a bit slower when doing the original tracks, making sure everything was perfect and tight, so there would be no problems when we got to the mixing.

Knowing that the album turned out as good as it did, if you had the chance, would you go back and do anything differently?

Yeah. There're still a few things that we wanted to do, but we were running out of time. We only had him for a certain amount of time to do the mixing, so we had to cram in as much as we could. The album is really stripped down and raw, almost like a live album.

It's the same way with the KATAKLYSM records. Their shit sounds really brutal and almost primitive, but it's so clean and so tight that you can hear everything. It's perfect!

That's why we're so excited about recording with him again! We have material that didn't make it to the album, because of the time frame. We have some extra stuff ready and can't wait to go back. We have a lot more confidence, now that we know that we have a producer that understands us. We know we can put our trust in Jean-Francois.

I remember hanging out with you guys in April, in Holland at the Tilburg show. Kyle told me there were a couple of songs you wanted to re-record from* Stillborn *and* The Ten Commandments. *Did you get to do that at all?

No. Those were some bonus tracks. We were going to do two songs from *Stillborn* …

Which two songs?

"Dominated Resurgency" and "Carnivorous Misgiving." We're going to do this. We might even do a few more. Next time, we're going to be more prepared studio-wise and have all this ready before we have to go through all the customs shit, with Canada and the U.S.

The artwork for this album is some of the best that I've seen, once again, courtesy of Travis Smith. I saw on your web site that there is also a European version of the cover. Did he create that, as well? Was it your decision to do that, or was that another idea that he had?

We're signed to Nuclear Blast, and they were worried that some of the bigger distributors were going to have a problem with putting that cover in stores. We had to compromise and get an alternate cover. It's killer artwork! It's actually done by the guy who does the VADER stuff. It's cool because in Europe, it's a slip. There's a form for ordering merchandise on the back, then you just pull it off and the real cover is there, anyway. I think it's cool because now we've got two cool t-shirt designs!

Are you going to be selling those on tour?

Of course! On this little tour we're doing with

CREATION

CANNIBAL, we'll probably just have some with Travis's artwork. We're going to do a headlining tour of the States in February, then we'll probably print up both versions.

I was going to ask you about that towards the end of the interview...

Do you want the rundown? We're going to do that last leg of the CANNIBAL tour, and then a headliner in North America. In mid-March, we leave for Europe, where we're doing a tour with MARDUK. When that finishes, we're doing 13 or 14 shows on the No Mercy Festival, again. We just got confirmed to play Wacken the other day, too. We're just gonna try to plug this album as much as possible. Just look for us ugly guys, we'll be everywhere!

Why did Justin DiPinto leave the group so shortly after recording the album, and how did Arial become your new drummer?

I wish Justin would have told us a little sooner- we may have done it with another drummer, but he did such a good job. He worked so hard. We really thought he was going to put 100% into it. We told him that we were going to have a massive touring schedule coming up, and he just flat out said, "There's no way I can do it." I don't know. I know for one thing, he won't fly. He's like, "There's no way I'll get on an airplane." It just was not good. Nothing against Justin-he really is a great guy, and I couldn't believe it, myself. We had no idea this was going to happen. As soon as we found out, I told a couple of guys I know and one referred me to Arial. He contacted me, learned the new album, and we just went, "Damn, that was easy!" (LAUGHS). It was gonna be a major ordeal, and we were looking at some serious problems...

It sounds like you're not going to miss a step, with Arial back there.

Nah, he's already doing his first shows with us! He knows all the shit perfectly. He's a young guy; he's 23 years old. He goes, "I'm in until you kick me out!" So, he's hungry for it!

Including Gus, you have had three different drummers since April. Does that mess with your continuity or your focus?

Oh, yeah! I'll tell you exactly what happened. Dave lived in New York. We used to jam with Gus, until we could demo some of our shit. We would take these demos and send them to Dave, then when Dave would come down, he would play them the right way. We needed someone to just jam with, to get our ideas on tape. Dave runs his own business and he's got a family now. He's like, "I can't leave for five weeks. I can do, maybe, two weeks." We had to do five weeks. There was no way we could cancel, and the only way for us to not cancel was... we were like, "Gus, you're going!" But it was clear while we were over there that he was no Dave. We altered the set a bit, made it easier for him. We were still going to maybe have Dave do the record. Another one of our ex-drummers, Derik Roddy, actually hooked me up with Justin. He's like, "I know this guy! We recorded his band, DIVINE RAPTURE. They came to Tampa. This kid's great! He's a big fan. I'll call him up!" It was this really weird tornado of drummers!

***After leaving the band for a two album stint with CANNIBAL CORPSE, Rob Barrett returned on* The Fine Art of Murder, *and has been an integral part of* MALEVOLENT CREATION *ever since. Can you describe the differences in energy and the feeling in the band when Rob was playing with CANNIBAL verses when he came back to* MALEVOLENT?**

When he quit CANNIBAL CORPSE, that was his personal decision. He had issues, and he wasn't happy. He called me and told me, and I was like, "Fuck man, our other guitar player J.P. is not going to be able to go on tour because of his job." He just went, "I'm back." I was like, "KILLER!" He's been back. He did all the *In Cold Blood* tours with us, in America and Europe. We've put out three albums together. Rob compliments my songs. He has a lot of input on the way songs come out. He's go^^^^ at arranging, and he's been writing more songs. He's got the same ideas as me, musically. We grew up together, and we can still put music together.

When you started* MALEVOLENT CREATION *back in 1987, did you see yourselves 15 years down the road, still churning out brutal death metal and kicking asses across the world?

Back then, I was hoping! That was a pretty far-fetched idea, but now I'm like, "What the fuck?" It's hard to believe that anyone can still be involved in music for that long, because the music business chews you up and spits you out! We do it because we're fans, just like everybody else. We love music.

Rob also plays with you and Kyle in HATEPLOW. When you create music, do you write separately for each band, or do you write the music and then decide later which band it's better suited for?

No, because they're different. With HATEPLOW, we don't really put much thought into it. We just get together, throw out a bunch of punk rock riffs, and play them at lightning speed. We'll always do it after we're done doing a **MALEVOLENT** record or tour. We're going to do a third album after we finish all this touring, sometime in the middle of the summer. We're just going to focus on one thing, get together for a couple of weeks, and unload! We'll go into our warehouse, get a couple cases of beer and start recording everything we do, make some chaos! We're going to do one more, and we're going fully grind-core, so it doesn't even come close to sounding like **MALEVOLENT**. I think we're eliminating all double bass. From what Kyle told me, he's like, "No one will be able to understand one word I say!" If he had his way before, nothing would be audible.

Kyle's addition to the lineup is one of the best things that has ever happened to you guys. Did he have a difficult time, shifting from the HATEPLOW style to the* MALEVOLENT *frame of mind?

I know it was an adjustment for him, but we were willing to work out anything we had to do with him. We know how good he is and we know how much power he has. He puts 100% into it. When it comes to this stuff, it's a little bit different. You can understand his voice on the new album. He made an emphasis to get clarity. I think when you can understand what he's saying, it makes it that much heavier.

VILE

BY JIM MILLS

USUALLY, THE 2ND AND 3RD ALBUMS FOR A BAND ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT. THOSE ALBUMS ARE THE ONES THAT WILL MAKE OR BREAK THE BAND. IF YOU LOOK AT THE SOPHOMORE RELEASES YOU'LL FIND CLASSICS, LIKE BLESSED ARE THE SICK, HELL AWAITS, RIDE THE LIGHTNING, BUTCHERED AT BIRTH, LEGION, AND SYMPHONIES OF SICKNESS. A YOUNG BUNCH OF LONG HAIRS FROM SAN FRAN HAVE A NEW CD CALLED DEPOPULATE, AND I HAVE TO ADMIT, IT'S FUCKING GOOD. I WAS FAMILIAR WITH **VILE** BECAUSE OF COFFEEGRINDER, FROM **CANNIBAL CORPSE**. I AM SURE EVERYBODY HAS SEEN HIM WEARING THE **VILE** SHIRT OVER THE PAST YEARS. DEPOPULATE IS A FINE OFFERING TO THE EXTREME MUSIC WORLD, IF YOU'RE INTO MUSIC THAT IS AN OVERTURE FOR SORROW THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Pit: Depopulate *is* VILE*'s second album. How have you guys changed since the first record?*

Colin Davis: I'd say that *Depopulate* is more modern sounding. It's American style death metal, but the music has become faster and more challenging and we want to change with the times, somewhat. There's still that killer groove that we've always had, but now it's just faster and more technical.

What topics (if any) were you guys trying to touch on, lyric-wise?

Most of the lyrics are based in history, but have been turned into fiction with some gory details accentuated. They are all stories of some kind. Juan Urteaga, the vocalist, writes them.

Would you consider* VILE*'s lyrics run of the mill and typical for death metal?

No, I wouldn't say that they are run of the mill. I think that they are made to sound cool with the parts in the songs, though. That's another consideration when writing death metal lyrics. A lot of the words are chosen for the vibe or power.

The word "brutal" is thrown around like a dwarf. What does* VILE *consider "brutal" in music?

I know, brutal is so overused. I think death metal that's fast and has a lot of blast beats or double bass drums with insane vocals would be considered brutal. But brutal doesn't mean quality. Everybody tries to be brutal, or claims that they are brutal.

How difficult is it for you guys to keep fresh ideas, musically and conceptually?

That's pretty hard. The best thing we do to get over that is to write slowly, that way your songs don't sound so similar. But yeah, it can be challenging, writing this kind of music and keeping it fresh. So much has already been done. I think if we have one thing that stands out most among our genre, it is our groove parts. They are different than other bands' and they are the hooks that make you remember a particular song. We always want to keep that aspect.

Kids think that if you're into death metal, then that's all you listen to if you're a musician. What musicians do you get inspiration or writing ideas from, outside of the extreme music scene?

Good question. We listen to all sorts of music. I, myself, listen to everything. I'm a mastering engineer by trade, so I have to keep up on recordings. I get a lot of inspiration out of funk, world fusion, classical, or anything that is outside of the box, musically. Some bands I like that are great (but are not death metal) are HERBIE HANCOCK, CRITTERS BUGGIN', DEAD CAN DANCE, RAVI SHANKAR, ZAP MAMMA, AFTER FOREVER, THE GATHERING, ALAS, and tons of others. I have about 600 CDs and I'd say 350 are metal. The rest are other kinds of music. I've got to keep on searching for quality and inspiring music.

Juan and yourself both worked on the production and mastering, how has that "power" changed things for the sound of* VILE*?

That's all we have ever done in this band. All the demos and albums were produced by us. We love that. We need to have the time to get the result we want. We would need a huge budget to get the same quality at another studio, where we had to pay for the time and a producer. It can also be a burden because we can use too much time, unnecessarily. But since we are engineers we'll always do it that way, I guess.

Do you think that having a loved one die changes your concepts and lyrics?

Well, I guess it could. It would depend on if you let that influence your writings. It wouldn't affect me much, since I don't write them.

What do you guys do to stay away from the terrible sea of death metal clones?

We don't study their music, just check it out once and then move on. We have to stay aware of what the best stuff is and keep the quality up there. We don't want to copy other bands or write too fast. We keep the influences wide and varied and just keep it going. I don't want to think about it too much, though. The good stuff does eventually come out and make it into **VILE** songs.

Can you guys possibly have anymore pictures and names in the booklet??

I know! I guess the artist wanted to use all the stuff we gave him. That's funny. He did an amazing job, though. We love the artwork and layout.

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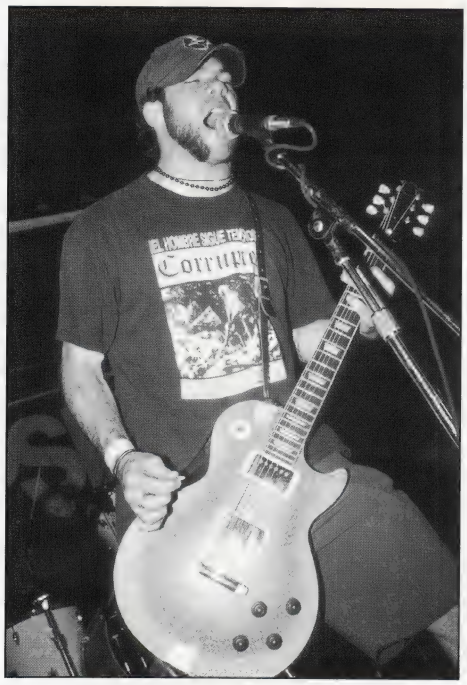
BONGZILLA

BONGZILLA: MONSTROUSLY SOUL DEPLETING SLUDGE THAT'S UNIFIED WITH THE INDIGNATION OF TRUCKER SPEED, PRODUCING GARGANTUAN RIFFS THAT DRAG DOWN YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM, WHILE LYRICALLY EXALTING THE SPLENDORS OF ONE OF MOTHER NATURE'S FINEST.

BY MICHA KITE

PHOTO BY FRANK WHITE



***Gateway* is an album that had many a stoner jonesing for its harvest. It's been a while since BONGZILLA busted out with the hydro and Pit spoke with Mike Makela (vocals/guitar) as the boys make sure there's no sign of dirt weed for miles!** "Since *Stash,* we've recorded *Apogee* on a label started by a friend of ours from Japan (Howling Bull America). We put out the three song ep and pressed it as a 12", also. That was our first record with our new bass player, Nate Dethlefsen. The deal with Relapse was that we never signed a contract until *Stash* and we were having problems when we were ready to record. We had those songs for two years and with their budget, we weren't going to be able to record until *X*. We thought we would go into the studio with the woman who did *Gateway* so we could have a chance to work with her before the full length. Right about when *Apogee* came out we had everything worked out with Relapse."

Record label fiascos and band member exchanges are normal in rock and roll. Unfortunately, so is getting your gear ganked sometimes. "That only set us back a couple of months. The label helped us get a van. We also got some help from Green Amplification, who have done nothing but help us out. They built us these new amps (at cost) and shipped them over to us, so we're as happy as can be. I think one of our stolen heads turned up about an hour outside of our hometown in Rockford. We just hope that it's our amp and it will lead to the rest of our gear, then we'll have as much equipment as we ever wanted."

***It took no less than three ounces of Humboldt's finest to record* Stash. *With that in mind, you know the fellas just had to up the ante on* Gateway.** "We wouldn't always bring that much [to the studio] because, being in our hometown, people were always stopping by. There's a song everyone mistakes for "Sunshine Green", but it's an instrumental called "666 Lb. Bongsession"...On that track alone we probably smoked a quarter in the half-hour it took to record it. Everyday we would bring at least a quarter. Who knows what amount we actually smoked (laughter). There have always been lots of big buds in Madison. Right now, there is a heavy Indica strain and there's always Trinity around that these kids in our hometown grow. We usually try to get a mixed bag, so we can maintain. If you keep using the same strain, even if it's a great one, you'll become immune to it."

The thing that separates* BONGZILLA *from a lot of other stoner bands is the vocals. In the same breath, it's also the characteristic that makes them one of the more mimicked groups around. "The music has always been first. With the vocals, I want people to attempt to understand them. (If you do make that effort, you might get our message telling you to do what you should to legalize marijuana.) The idea is to mix them lower. That's where I like the vocals in music, to tell you the truth, especially that style of vocals."

The writing's on the wall when it comes to* BONGZILLA*'s message, but a love song? "Trinity IS a love song. That has been my favorite fucking weed; it gets you so cheesed out that after you smoke it you're giggling for a half an hour straight, like you're out of your head. A friend of mine started calling it 'gigglebush' so that's where that song title comes from. When someone has Trinity in Madison it's like, "ahh…the gigglebush is here" (laughter).

GRAVE

BY MICHA KITE

BETWEEN LAST YEAR'S ALBUMS AND THOSE RELEASED THUS FAR IN 2003, DEATH METAL IS FAR FROM DEAD, ESPECIALLY SWEDISH DEATH METAL! AFTER THE DISASSEMBLY OF **SUFFOCATION**, ONE CAN ONLY STOMACH SO MANY BANDS THAT REHASH THAT SHIT, OR ARE **IN FLAMES** PT. VII. OF COURSE, BEING THE OLD, JADED BASTARD THAT I AM, I'M ALL OVER YESTERDAY'S LEGACY, ONCE AGAIN ARISING. METAL HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME, VERY GOOD TO ME, WITH BANDS LIKE **ENTOMBED**, **UNLEASHED**, **NECROPHOBIC**, **DISMEMBER** AND NOW **GRAVE**. SO, WHERE IN THE FUCK ARE MY ARMY-ISSUED COMBAT BOOTS AND "GRIND CRUSHER" LONG SLEEVE?!

GRAVE was a key element in the primary, Swedish scene. After a distressing hiatus, Ola Lindgren (Vocals/Guitars) is equally as excited as I am about the group's reformation. "We got the band back together in early 2000 and started jamming with a full lineup again, as the *Hating Life* lineup was only Jensa (drums) and myself. We got the right people in the band and felt that everything was going the way that we wanted it. We talked to Century Media and they really wanted to do another album. Basically, we were bored with the normal lifestyles that we'd led the past couple of years. We wanted to see if we could get back out there with a new album and play as much as possible. Jonas played guitar on the first album before he ever started playing bass for us, and he asked if he could jam with us. He wanted to be active in a band, and he hadn't been since he left **GRAVE** in 1992. He knew a lot of the old songs and when we found Fredrick to play the bass, we decided to keep Jonas in the band as the other guitarist. Its a lot better, especially for live performances. He has more input in the songwriting now, as it's more divided within the band. Jonas is a couple of years older than we are and he's been involved in the music business for a very long time. We all like the same kind of music, it's good to have more input when it comes to writing. It was really easy to write the songs this time, we had a lot of riffs and we all put them together. Some we did at home, some at rehearsals, and we would modify them later. Fredrick has a lot of riffs on this album, as well."

It is engaging when one of your favorite bands regroup, but it's often met with mystification and skepticism, by fans and critics alike. "I had a couple fragments of songs at home when we got Jonas in the band and started rehearsing the old stuff. He started jamming a lot at home and came up with a lot of riffs, but there was no special thought behind them. We didn't sit down and think out what we were going to do. A lot of people like our stuff, it's kind of old school yet a lot of it has a fresh feel. It's very different from what death metal sounds like today, especially with all the blast beats and so on. Over here in Europe, the album has been out since late October. We've done a lot of interviews and people have said that it's nice to hear something different than these competing drummers, who play to see who's the fastest. We've always created music that's very easy to get into. I mean, if you walk into a **GRAVE** concert and you've never heard a **GRAVE** song before, you can get into the music right away because the groove and structure make it easy to enjoy. That's basically the idea we've always had; not to think too much and keep it easy for people."

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2. ulver - lyckantropen

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1. Part IV of the Breathing Shadow series, this highly anticipated album by Dan Swano offers magical tunes for fans of hard rock and melodic metal.

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HAMMERFALL

HAMMERFALL CONTINUES THEIR METAL CRUSADE WITH **CRIMSON THUNDER**, AND EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS BAND SPELLS METAL. THEIR IMAGE IS VERY VISIBLE AND SELF-ABSORBING. THE BAND IS COMMITTED TO BEING WHO THEY ARE, WHILE TRYING NOT TO SPREAD THEMSELVES TOO THIN. **HAMMERFALL** IS ONE OF THE BANDS LEADING THE METAL RESURGENCE AND THEY'RE DOING A FINE JOB OF IT. SOME FEEL OTHERWISE REGARDING THIS POINT, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE. HAMMERFALL IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, ONE OF THE HARDEST WORKING BANDS OUT THERE. VOCALIST, JOACIM CANS, GIVES SOME INSIGHT TO THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE **HAMMERFALL** CAMP.

Pit: Was there any special plan when putting this album together?

Joacim Cans: Well, what we do is write songs, and we don't really have a plan in mind. When we wrote this bunch of songs, we realized they turned out to be a very mid tempo. In my opinion, the mid tempo songs are the strongest ones. With these compositions, we feel like we're taking **HAMMERFALL** up another notch, and I feel that this is our strongest album yet.

What about the production aspect? Some people may say it's commercial sounding.

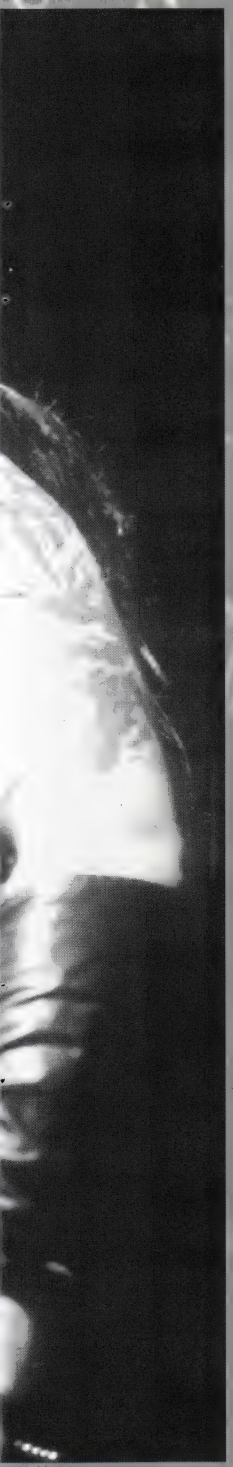
I have no problem with that. What we wanted to do was get away from the static, compressed sound that every band has, and especially from what I call the Italian drum sound that every band had to have. It stopped being personal, and we wanted a little bit of change. People forgot how to go in the studio and record the instrument how it's supposed to sound

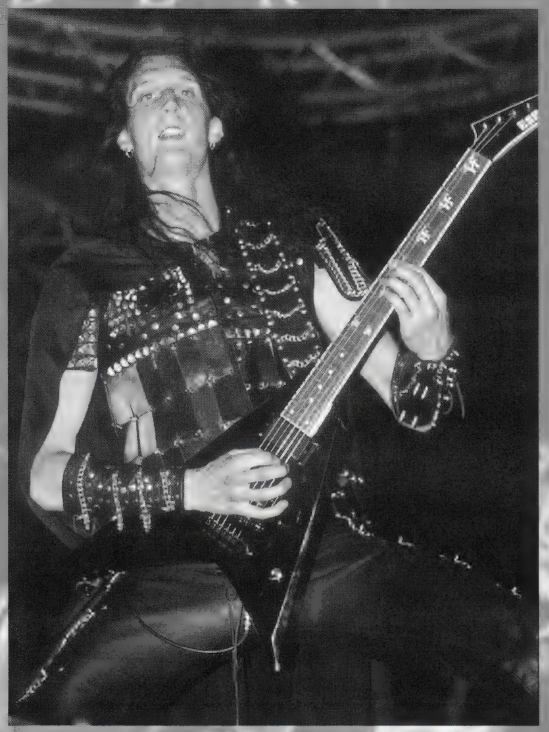
Did* Renegade *win you any new fans?

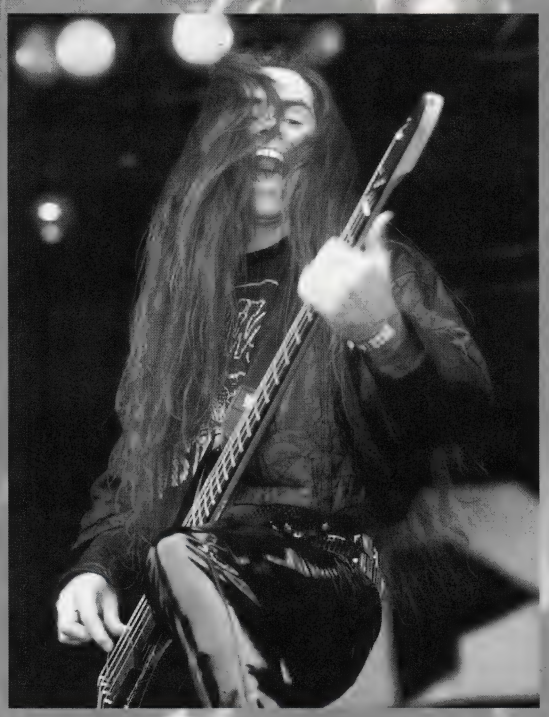
In Sweden, it did great. In most of the other countries, it did about the same as the previous albums, but in the States, we didn't do so well with *Renegade*. I thought we would do much better. We got our gold record in Sweden and I thought that was fantastic. So, our sales doubled in Sweden. Tour wise, we pulled twice the amount of people at the shows, even though the record sales didn't increase that much. Many people told us that they didn't like the sound or songs on the album, but I think it sounded so much more powerful.

I see that you have a U.S. tour lined up this time, which should increase the visibility of the band, as well as improve the sales. What are your hopes?

I hope we will become visible again. The problem with *Renegade* was timing. When that album came out, our label moved from Philadelphia to Los Angeles. It was very hard to get any proper promotion at that time. The label was switching hands, and it took some time to re-organize. We wanted to get a tour going, but we couldn't get anything good. Now, with our current tour we hope to promote the album and the band in the United States. In Europe, this kind of music is not an underground movement, and we hope to spread this kind of attitude in the U.S. We hope to gain a lot from the tour.







Also,* HAMMERFALL *has a new DVD out, any details?

It's two hours and 25 minutes long. It covers everything from 1998 up until the end of the *Renegade* tour in 2001. There's a lot of behind-the-scenes footage from every territory we played. There's a tribute to Chuck Schuldiner, who we played with in the U.S. back in 1998. There's live footage, all of the clips are bootleg material. You'll find all kinds of weird stuff going on, and plenty of bonus material.

You've used a big name producer for* Renegade. *Did it pay to record in the U.S. with a big name?

We did invest a lot to get that album produced and released. I think it was a good move because we did get a gold record out of it, and we were happy with the record. But, if you look at the overall sales we didn't get that much back. We still had bills to pay, and at times we felt like we invested a lot of money, and didn't get that much back.

Are you able to make a comfortable living from your music?

At this point we are, so things are good for us. We're able to concentrate on this band as much as we want to.

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GOATWHORE
Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun
CD-3017-2

With its Rotten Records debut, *The Eclipse of the Ages Into Black*, Louisiana miscreants Goatwhore explored old school satanic black metal as no American act had before. Goatwhore's new second effort, *Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun*, ventures into darker, less conventional territory. Probing the pitch-black recesses of mind and soul in a disturbing, introspective examination of dark forces at work, and unleashing it all with a feral hookiness and atmospheric flare, the band steps beyond the bounds of mere black metal into a realm all its own.

St. Louis extremists *Vampire Mooose* are anything but your average metal beast. Fusing death metal brutality and raw hardcore intensity with abstract, progressive arrangements and free-jazz freakouts, the band is unorthodox, unrelenting and utterly unpredictable. Their Rotten Records debut is an insane cross-breeding of Meshuggah, Dillinger Escape Plan and Obituary-style sonic terror tactics—only weirder and more vicious. They call it "rawkus," and it will rock your world.

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VOIVOD IS A BAND THAT HAS ALWAYS

THE BAND'S CREATIVE OUTPUT HAD BEEN VERY IMPRESSIVE, BUT NEVER REALLY TRANSLATED INTO COMMERCIAL SUCCESS. DESPITE THAT FACT, **VOIVOD** KEPT ON GOING ON, ALWAYS BEING TRUE TO ITS FORM AND CREATING UNCOMPROMISING SOUNDS. OVER THE YEARS THE BAND WENT THROUGH LINE UP CHANGES, BUT MANAGED TO SUSTAIN ITS APPEAL. RECENTLY, VOIVOD WAS REBUILT WITH THE ORIGINAL FRONT MAN, SNAKE, PUTTING THE GAS MASK BACK ON, AND NEWEST ADDITION, JASON NEWSTED, ASSUMING FOUR-STRING DUTIES UNDER THE NAME JASONIC. THESE CHANGES SHOULD BENEFIT **VOIVOD**, RETURN IT TO ITS FORMER GLORY, AND POSSIBLY TAKE THEM ON TO NEW CAREER HIGHS.

VOIVOD

BY MARK KADZIELAWA

DRUMMER AND VISUAL MASTERMIND, AWAY (MICHEL LANGEVIN), TALKS ABOUT RECENT LINE UP ADJUSTMENTS, THE NEW ALBUM (UNTITLED AT THE PRESS TIME) AND THE ROLE OF **VOIVOD** IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM.

Pit: It looks like you went the full circle, and now the band is almost back to what it was in the beginning. So, how did you go about getting Snake back on vocals, and then eventually add Jason Newsted into the ranks?

Away: In early 2001 we didn't see any purpose of going on. We had no budget to do a proper album. It was going nowhere, and we decided to split the band. A few months later I got together with Piggy (Denis D'Amour, guitars) and we decided that we wanted to continue to play music together. We called Snake to see what he was doing. We always remained good friends. He would still come to see us whenever we played in Montreal, and would come on stage to sing **VOIVOD**. The same day we phoned Snake I got a call from Jason Newsted, who was interested in working on a side project we began some time ago. I mentioned to him that we were gonna do an album with Snake, and I asked him if he wanted to contribute bass to the album. He got really excited, he wanted to get involved in the writing process, he wanted to play and help with the recording process. Finally, during the pre-production of the new album, he decided to officially join the band. That happened at the end of September, last year.

How is it, working with Snake after a rather long break?

It sounds like Snake has a lot to say because he was away for so long. The dynamics are great. We're all really hyper to go on tour, and just to jam. The vibe is excellent and when you listen to the album, it sounds very positive.

***Do you think there will still be a vital audience for* VOIVOD?**

Oh yeah. As long as we do our own thing, I think the people will like it. We're not about to copy any bands to be popular. It's still 100% **VOIVOD** music. That's the thing with us, even though we started 20 years ago, we still manage to enjoy a good following. I think our fans are very faithful. I go to visit our website, and the traffic there is very impressive, for an underground band.

Being a* VOIVOD *fan since the early days, I've always felt that in many ways, the band was too original and too good for its own sake.

I really don't know what to say to this. We always played what we wanted to play. It might be weirder than your average band. It takes a lot of perseverance to play that type of music for twenty years. It doesn't always pay the bills.

How are you guys doing financially, after twenty years of being in the business?

We get royalties from the older albums. Besides that, each of us is involved in something. I'm the computer graphic designer. Piggy is a light designer for the oldest theater in Montreal. Snake has a restaurant. But we all need music to survive, spiritually. Now, we can finally negotiate a publishing deal, and concentrate more on the music. It's gonna be a better financial year for us. The last couple of years have been very rough. Actually, ever since the accident in 1998, things were not so good for us.

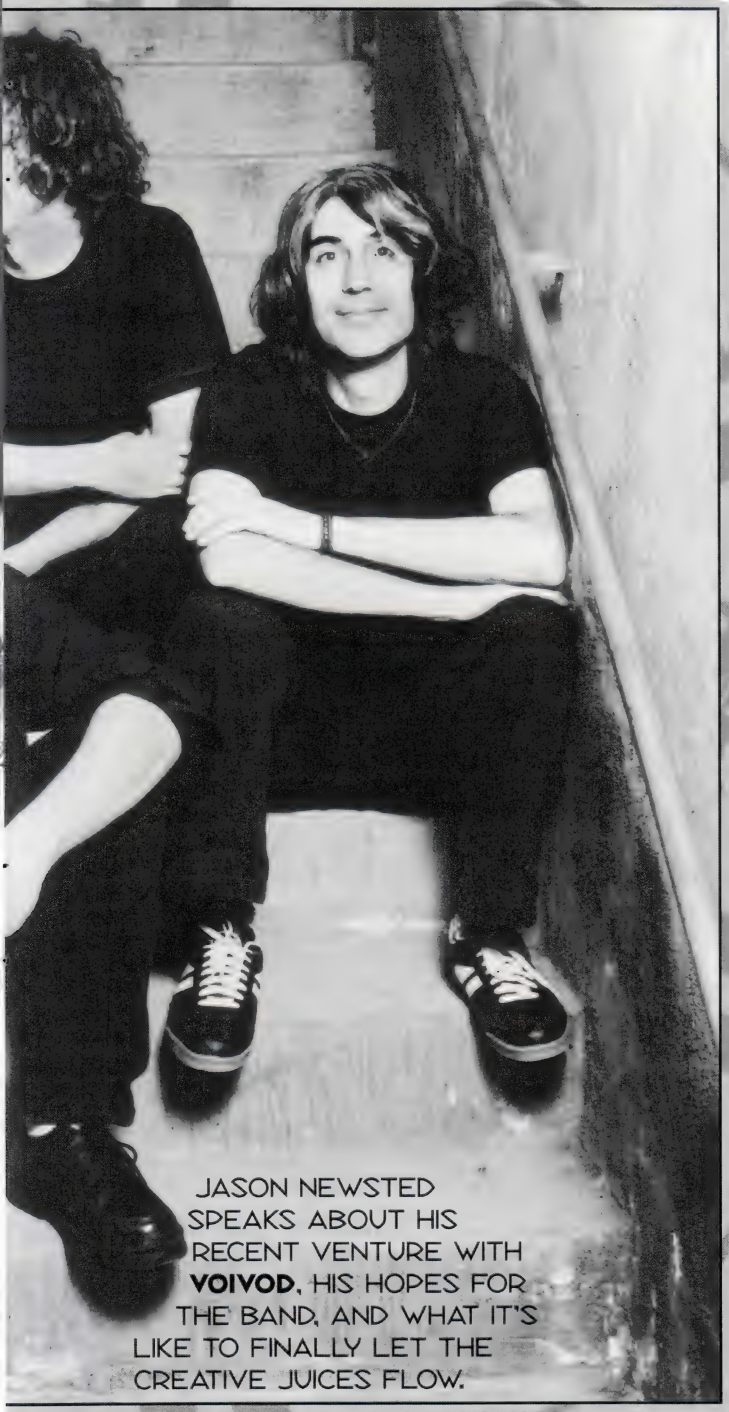
Will Jason Newsted's presence in the band raise your profile?

Well, I believe everyone who is into hard music will find us interesting. I hope those fans who missed us the first time will give us a chance now. Jason had a lot of exposure, and I think it will help to spread our music to new people. The topics we sing about make a lot of sense. I mean, we sang about nuclear war back on *War And Pain*, and the topic is still very truthful. So, maybe when the fans hear the music they'll get the same enlightenment I had when hearing DEAD KENNEDYS and SEX PISTOLS, and other bands like that. I think the album is pure **VOIVOD**. I think it will appeal to any fan of heavy music. I can see **VOIVOD** and METALLICA fans enjoying it equally.

What touring plans do you have?

We're hoping to tour the U.S. as soon as possible. We want to expose this music to as many fans possible. Also, we hope to go to Japan this time. We have many fans there, but we've never been. We might do some headlining shows, or join a festival. The ultimate would be to join Ozzfest. That would be a dream come true for all members of **VOIVOD**.

PUSHED THE LIMITS OF HEAVY MUSIC.



BASS PLAYER, JASON NEWSTED, FIRST EMERGED ONTO THE METAL SCENE AS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND **FLOTSAM & JETSAM**. HE REACHED ALL TIME HIGHS UPON JOINING **METALLICA**, WHO WERE AT THAT TIME A VERY BIG UNDERGROUND SENSATION, BREAKING FAST INTO THE MAINSTREAM. DESPITE STEADY PAYCHECKS AND THE INSTANT RECOGNITION GAINED AS A MEMBER OF **METALLICA**, NEWSTED GREW DISILLUSIONED WITH THE BAND'S DIRECTION AND LEFT THE GROUP.

JASON QUICKLY FOUND HIMSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF SEVERAL MUSICAL PROJECTS. WORKING WITH **VOIVOD** PROVED TO BE THE MOST AMBITIOUS, CREATIVELY, ADDING PERSONAL FULFILLMENT FROM BEING A LONG TIME ADMIRER OF THE BAND'S MUSIC.

JASON NEWSTED SPEAKS ABOUT HIS RECENT VENTURE WITH **VOIVOD**, HIS HOPES FOR THE BAND, AND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FINALLY LET THE CREATIVE JUICES FLOW.

***Pit: How did you get involved with* VOIVOD?**

Jason Newsted: We've been friends for many, many years. It all goes back to the early Metal Blade years. We were in the same boat, competing for the same dollars. FLOTSAM was always very envious of **VOIVOD**. I first got together with the **VOIVOD** guys back in 1988, after I joined METALLICA. They came over, we had a barbecue, played football, etc. We kept in contact through the '90s. We would meet up in hotels while I was touring. We put together this little side project and we would try to make some noise, whenever possible. We always talked about making an album together and it was finally coming to the real thing, not just talk. I was trading tapes with Piggy and we were, basically, exchanging ideas. All of us got together last September and, after about three or four days of playing together, we decided to bring the vampire back. Those guys pretty much called it quits, so it was a good shot of energy and time for a rebirth.

When you finally got a chance to do it, how did it feel?

It was incredible. Even today, we played for about an hour, and it was great. We'll be doing more playing today and I feel fantastic.

Did you find* VOIVOD*'s style to be very un-limiting?

Yes, it's a great chance for me to play with the cool, distorted sound that I've always wanted to play with. It's perfect. It really was destined to happen this way. This new rig that I'm using is really incredible. It gives me this sound that I always wanted to have. **VOIVOD**'s a band that always took chances and did what they wanted to do. There's a great feeling within this band, as far as the hunger that still exists. I can't even explain it.

I was just talking to Away, saying that* VOIVOD*, as a band, was always too good and too ahead of its time for their own sake.

Well, yeah. That's the thing. We were trying to think of some catch phrases to work with in our ads. We came up with: "The time has come for the band that's always been ahead of its time."

I've always viewed* VOIVOD *as the KING CRIMSON of heavy music.

Absolutely. They are the originators of the innovation, and the weirdness, the dissonance, and really mathematical stuff. This album is probably the most direct record **VOIVOD** has ever made. For those reasons I think it will appeal to a lot of people. It's not too psychedelic, or too complex. It just has the very identifiable sound **VOIVOD** is known for. We hope to attract many new listeners.

What do you feel you contributed to the band?

Leadership, energy, experience, time, focus, money. Brotherhood, with these guys there's some kind of reliance.

Any feelings on coming from something very big and going into something fairly small?

It's so real. That doesn't even come into the equation for me, at all. Think about what I've done. If I was worried about that kind of shit, I would've stayed in that band. I'm doing now what I wanna do, and this is it. It's very exciting. It's about putting your money where your mouth is. I'm paying a hard amount of dollars to make sure that people hear good music, that people who give a shit hear something really good. You can't ask for anything more. It's being true to yourself.

Where do you, personally, hope to take this band?

As far as it can go, as long as the demand is there and people want to see it. My main reason for even doing this, putting as much money and time as I have into it (besides selfish reasons of enjoying it), is to get these guys the recognition they deserve. I want for them to be able to support themselves with their instruments. It doesn't have to be some grand amount of money, just enough so they don't have to be doing other things. They were meant to be musicians. They were meant to make their living from music. They did enough great work in their back catalogue that they should be able to support themselves from the music they make. That's what I wanna see happen. The album is a great 65 minutes of old school metal that has.....new future. There are new horizons for **VOIVOD**. If this gets really big and successful, that'll be great. As for me, I'm set. I invested my money, it didn't go up the nose. But, as far as having these guys get some of the benefits, that would be great. They deserve it. These guys are still married to the music, they listen to the same music, dress the same, hang out.

With all these headlines I see about you, do you have to watch what you say? I mean, you could be joking and next thing you know, it's a headline.

Oh, absolutely. We know what the press does. The press sensationalizes everything to get your attention. If there is some kind of rift or somebody's fighting, you know it will be blown out of proportion.

Music Reviews

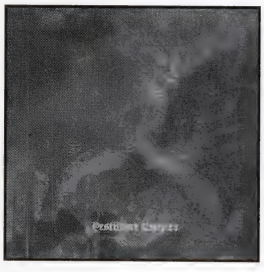
ANDROMEDA – *II=I* – Century Media Records

As any fan of music will tell you, discovering a new band you've never heard before and truly enjoying what you hear is like Christmas in its own right. There's nothing like that feeling you get when you first experience a band that you know you are going to love. With *II=I*, Sweden's **ANDROMEDA** bring Christmas in March. This album is what so many releases today are not: intellectual, varied, emotional and personal. Each song is a roller coaster in itself. The music flows wildly, from the tripped-out and dark progression of PINK FLOYD and PORCUPINE TREE, to the technical monstrosities of DREAM THEATER and SYMPHONY X, to the absolute thrash of NEVERMORE. If you're fed up with bands that are just too cool to learn how to play, go get yourself an early Christmas present. – Adam Sagan
Century Media Records: 2323 W El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250 USA www.centurymedia.com

DISSECTION – *Live Legacy* – Nuclear Blast

Few names in the black metal scene ignite the flames of the masses as much as that of **DISSECTION**. Near-Gods (or demons) of their genre and masters of their art, they met an untimely demise at the height of their potential. The air is full of whispers and mumblings that we will soon see a new **DISSECTION** record and while I hope against hope that this happens, I'm not going to sweat it. In the meanwhile, *Live Legacy* will more than satisfy any **DISSECTION** fan holding their breath for the new record. Recorded at the band's monstrous performance at Wacken's Open Air Festival in 1997, this is exactly what you look for in a live record: blistering, dead-on performances, a choice set list, a rabid crowd, and most importantly, a good audio mix. *Live Legacy* has it all. If you're familiar with the quality of EMPEROR's *Emperial Live Ceremony*, you know what to expect here. No more words are needed; the name **DISSECTION** speaks for itself. This is a formula against which most other live recordings simply can't hold their own. Try not to blow out your speakers. – Adam Sagan
Nuclear Blast: 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250 USA www.nuclearblast.de

EXMORTEM – *Pestilence Empire* – Osmose Productions



This fucking band has been around forever and they just keep getting better with age! *Pestilence Empire* is the heaviest **EXMORTEM** to date! If you have not followed **EXMORTEM** since the days of old, be warned: This is not a band that is unfamiliar with progression, so don't look for the old school death sound they once unleashed. What you can expect is technical, fast and furious death metal, still brooding and totally evil in approach. I was sold upon hearing the first riff of the first track, "Ghastly Grotesque"! But I would have to say that the track that really floored me was track number three, "Pestifer," which opens so chaotically totally devastating the listener. The main riff has this bizarre yet utterly wicked sounding slide incorporated within the technical finger work that just blew me away! This is the kind of innovation that is rarely found in most of today's formulated metal. The drumming on this is right up there with the best of them. It is fast and precise, yet interesting. All in all the production is right where it needs to be, clear and clean with nothing lost in the background. **EXMORTEM** breathes new life into this evil style of death metal with *Pestilence Empire*! Fans of true blasphemous death, do not pass this one by. – Kyle Spanswick
Osmose Prods: B.P. 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France www.osmoseproductions.com

THE GATHERING – *Souvenirs* – The End Records

It's a gift to have music from **THE GATHERING**. Out of my entire collection of CDs, there are only a few bands I would be able to listen to over and over again, and **THE GATHERING** is one of them. I was lucky enough to get a copy from the drummer, Hans (thank you Hans), thus leading to this raving review of *Souvenirs*. There are two ways I could write this review. The first way is for current fans of **THE GATHERING**, and that's easy: it's amazing, so get it. The other way, however, is for people that have never heard of **THE GATHERING** before, and that's how I am going to do this review.
Souvenirs is 43 minutes of 100% PURE musical creativity and well executed playing. Constantly growing and experimenting, **THE GATHERING** has made another true piece of musical perfection. **THE GATHERING** has never been afraid to try something new, be it sounds, ideas, or noises, anything and everything is open game for them to use. But… no matter what the instruments are doing, the item that makes **THE GATHERING** complete is Anneke van Giersbergen, with a voice that can be as mellow as a low tide, or as intense as a spinal fracture. Songs from **THE GATHERING** are all memorable and will take your mind to other places you haven't been before. It could be relaxation, sadness, or whatever life is jamming down your throat at that point in time.
Souvenirs continues along the direction that **THE GATHERING** started heading towards with *How to Measure a Planet* and *If-Then-Else*. Straying away from the earlier albums, *Souvenirs* offers a more straightforward rock style. Still keeping the same warm production that *HTMAP* and *If-Then-Else* have, *Souvenirs* seems to come off a bit sharper than the previous two albums. It doesn't introduce anything shockingly new, however, it still maintains the beautiful style that **THE GATHERING** has created. Each song has its own identity, and interesting structures and ideas.
In my humble, non-biased opinion, **THE GATHERING** have a lot more to offer than bands on major labels, and they are one of the most under-rated bands to come onto the scene. Unfortunately for them, they started off on a metal label, and when **THE GATHERING** first started to make a name, playing heavy metal wasn't so cool, thus they were kind of screwed. Hopefully, you will take an easy step in the right direction for finding original, awesome music. *Souvenirs* is one of the best albums of 2003 and will be a long standing favorite with people who love real music. – Jim Mills
THE GATHERING: PO Box 4062, 5604 EB Eindhoven, The Netherlands www.gathering.nl
The End Recs: 331 Rio Grande #58, SLC, UT 84101 USA www.theendrecords.com Psychonaut Recs: www.psychonautrecords.com

GENOCIDE KOMMANDO – *Black Metal Supremacy* – Moribund Records

GENOCIDE KOMMANDO is the conjuration of Kommander Horrendus and Kommander Noktu (which I assume is the same Noktu of CELESTIA and Drakkar Productions). This is raw aggressive black metal hailing from France. *Black Metal Supremacy* is to the point and in your face, no unnecessary bullshit, just pure and stripped down. The vocals, for the most part, remind me of HORNA, (it varies from song to song due to the fact that both members do vocals) but all similarities end there. The riffs, though minimalistic, do not become monotonous but change just enough to keep it all interesting. All in all, this is really great shit. My only complaint would be the fact that it is yet another black metal band with a drum machine. I feel this always makes the overall sound a little flat and dull, but it is kept in the background in this case and that is a plus. Those who have had experience in the underground black metal scene know how difficult it is to find members who are not complete fucking morons and therefore realize how hard it can be to obtain a real and reliable drummer, so in many cases the drum machine is the only option. The imagery is fucking great! They have the whole satanic, anti-zog, anti-humanity militant thing down. The CD tray is a synagogue in flames that just says it all! Once again, Moribund does not disappoint. – Kyle Spanswick
Moribund Records: 530-A 19th Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 USA www.moribundcult.com

IR8 / SEXOTURICA – *IR8 vs. Sexoturica* – Chophouse Records

This excellent studio endeavor features former METALLICAN Jason Newsted's voice and bass with an extraordinary backup band: STRAPPING YOUNG LAD's Devin Townsend on guitar, Tom Hunting of EXODUS pounding the drums, and SEPULTURA's Andreas Kisser on guitar. Sound good? It is. Newsted's throat is well suited to the old school metal vibe here, the songs are catchy (like the mighty "Colossus"), and the band's playing is cohesive and satisfying. There's something reassuring about metalheads getting back to their roots in this raw and thrashy fashion. There are actually two projects on this disc: **IR8** is fun old school metal, while **SEXOTURICA** blends elements of SEPULTURA, EXODUS, and METALLICA. The recording was made just prior to Newsted's joining VOIVOD, and his departure from ECHOBRAIN. (He will still oversee ECHOBRAIN.) – Jon "K" Konjoyan
Chophouse Records: 454 Las Gallinas Ave #353, San Rafael, CA 94903 USA www.chophouserecords.com

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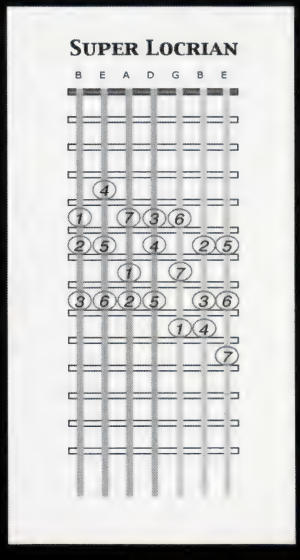

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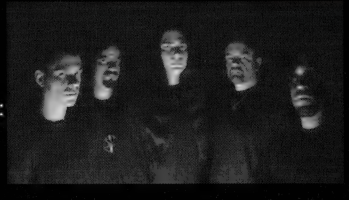

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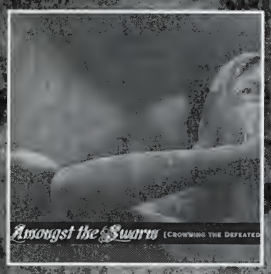
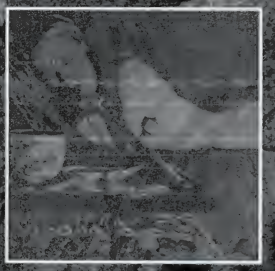


AMONGST THE SWARM – *Crowning the Defeated* – Skeptic Productions

AMONGST THE SWARM play a brutalizing style of metal/hardcore. Their sound is chunk driven groove to fuck shit up to! The production is killer, especially the guitar tone which is solid. The drums could come up a little but other than that, it's put together very well. There's not too much deviation from song to song, but that's ok because the style is so well executed in the first place. The best song on this release is "In Your Time..." which has great song composition and is very heavy. The lyrics seem to be thoughts about life that ring true. Deejay Perry's vocals really shred and are mean as hell! For those of you who love hardcore, I suggest you pick this shit up A.S.A.P. – Bill Laerton
AMONGST THE SWARM: www.amongsttheswarm.com
Skeptic Productions: 5781 Oakland Terrace, Apt *D, Indianapolis, IN 46220 USA www.harakiri666.com/skeptic

ANUBIS RISING – *Scales Of Truth* – Transgalactic Ladder



ANUBIS RISING has never failed to bring a smile to my face every time I see them live, or hear their new music. Since their first release, *Opening of the Mouth*, I was hooked. **ANUBIS RISING** plays a unique style of extreme music, fused with atmospheric blends of obscure thoughts and emotions. A year ago **ANUBIS RISING** hit a home run with the UPHILLBATTLE split ep. This limited release (now non-existent) saw their true writing capabilities with *Infinite Self Perpetuation*. Six minutes of a roller coaster ride of death-grind, hardcore, and progressive style song structures. Upon hearing that **ANUBIS RISING** had a new 10" ep coming out, my infatuation with this band forced me to get a CD of the new stuff. As expected, **ANUBIS RISING** has brought out new elements and ideas to offer the extreme music world. You can expect clever hooks and mind burning guitar writing of atmospheric portions, leaving room for the music to breath and the listener to catch their breath and gather themselves, once again. You may have a hard time finding the 10" *Scales of Truth*, so the best thing to do is to e-mail the band from their website and order through them. – Jim Mills
ANUBIS RISING: PO Box 1219, Hawthorne, CA 90251 USA www.anubisrising.net

ARSON – *Lacerate the Sky* – Resurrection AD Records

The dichotomy of fire has always intrigued people. A fire can devour, leaving a wasteland. Out of the ashes, though, new life always emerges. The severity of this balance is heard in the music of **ARSON**. Death becomes life, waste becomes necessity. This is especially true of their latest endeavor, *Lacerate the Sky*. This is **ARSON**'s third album since the band came together in '98, and their first full-length effort. They offer up a very clean, very heavy album (recorded at Trax East Recording Studio [along with the likes of DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN and HATEBREED]). I like it because it's thoughtful and creative, but still retains the heavy edge that we love in music! The lyrics are aggressive and intelligent. The music, fast and heavy, but melodic. The extremes of fire can indeed be felt in **ARSON**'s music, overall. I like the first track, "In Defiance", the best—what a great way to start out an album! If you like hard-hitting and meaningful music, you should definitely check these guys out. – Errin Klein Resurrection A.D. Records: PO Box 763, Red Bank, NJ 07701 USA www.resurrection-ad.com

ASGAROTH – *Red Shift* – Peaceville Records

After making waves in the Spanish scene since their conception in Barcelona during the mid-'90s, **ASGAROTH** have finally been picked up for major distribution. *Red Shift*, their first album on Peaceville, is a strong, keyboard driven, dark/goth metal offering. Lots of DIMMU BORGIR-style drum lines mix with drudgy LACUNA COIL-ish guitar work. The keyboards navigate the direction of every song, driving each selection forward with sort of a low-budget, horror film aesthetic (think "Nightmare On Elm Street"). The vocals come off like .. AND OCEANS when aggressive, FEAR FACTORY melodic when clean, with creepy religious choirs popping up here and there to give it an eerie edge. The production gives *Red Shift* a real subterranean goth sort of quality – as if the album was recorded in some ancient European catacomb. For the most part I liked this album, although there are a few skip-over tracks here and there. Still, this one will definitely be embraced by the OPETH crowd. – Ryan Bartek Peaceville Recs: PO Box 41084, Philadelphia, PA 19127 USA www.peaceville.com

AXIS OF ADVANCE – *The List* – Osmose Productions

This release is easily summed up: Fucking brutal! **AXIS OF ADVANCE** slaughter all with their Canadian brand of unrelenting war metal! This is easily among such greats as BLACK WITCHERY, BLASPHEMY and REVENGE! The approach is, of course, direct and pummeling. The harsh blast beats rarely deviating, accompanied by raw aggressive riffs, give the overall sound a completely spiteful and blasphemous feel. The vocals are hate filled and spastic, with the occasional pitch modified vocal effects adding just the perfect edge to a band of this nature. I would have to say that the first track, "Annihilation," and the fourth track, "Massacrion," are the most devastating. The cover art says it all, with a post-apocalyptic scene of soldiers in gas masks tagging P.O.W.s at gunpoint. There are definitely some unspoken undertones in the band's imagery, but I'm sure that it's purely coincidental, right? **AXIS OF ADVANCE** have claimed their throne in the pantheon of the ever-growing Canadian black metal elite! Total fucking war! – Kyle Spanswick Osmose Prods: B.P. 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France www.osmoseproductions.com

CORPORATION 187 – *Perfection In Pain* – Wicked World / Earache Records USA

Perfection In Pain is another excellent thrash metal record that you – yes you – should run out and buy this very instant. **CORPORATION 187** tear it up with vicious finesse, refusing to slow down at any point on this disc. This entire thing explodes right in your face with an apocalyptic wall of sound. Tons of great riffs, speedmetal percussion, electric solos, demonic growling and technical proficiency. Superb production, courtesy of HYPOCRISY's Peter Tagtgren, great cover art by DARK TRANQUILITY's Nicklas Sundin – *Perfection In Pain* is worth every single penny. In short, this album fucking rocks. – Ryan Bartek Earache Recs USA: 43 West 38th St, 2nd Fl, New York, NY 10018 www.earache.com

DIRTNAP – *Dirtnap* – Independent Release

If you like your music heavy, raw, and thrashy, **DIRTNAP** is your band. Formed in 1999, the group uses words like "modern" and "innovative" to describe its style of metal. While not as crazy as fellow Coloradoans, CEPHALIC CARNAGE, **DIRTNAP**'s pissed off vocals, grinding intensity, and obvious love of weed are sometimes reminiscent. Interesting musical twists, like the high-frequency sonar pings and bass intro on "Pigs," are complimented by some of the most intelligent lyrics on the scene today. With Iraq in the news, singer Fred Legarda screams "It's on now, it's war now, let's make something out of nothing." This is a band who obviously thinks a song should have meaning. And don't miss their impressive BRUJERIA cover, a hidden bonus track. After four years, 150 shows and now this satisfying disc under their belt, **DIRTNAP** seems ready to break out. – Jon "K" Konjoyan
DIRTNAP: 2040 Heathercrest Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80915 USA www.dirtnaprocks.com

ENGORGE – *Dead...Fuck...Blackness* – Dark Horizon Records

This is a band I was not previously familiar with. Upon first listen, I was immediately impressed with what I was hearing. **ENGORGE** play blasphemous black/death in the old vein. It is harsh and aggressive with mostly mid-ranged to low-ended barking, and the occasional raspy screams. The overall style is comparable to the likes of MASOCHIST or CRUCIFIER, but a little more primitive in approach. There is nothing too fancy, nor any flashy hype, just straightforward onslaught, the way it should be! The production is nice and necro, but clear enough to decipher everything. The songs are not entirely too long, more brutal and to the point. There is not much deviation from song to song, but there is plenty of different vocal styling from K.E.P. to keep it interesting. This CD has twelve tracks plus six bonus tracks, plenty of sick material for the money! The cover art caught my eye, it does a great job of putting imagery to sound. This release really brings to mind the early days of U.S. underground black/death. It is good to know that there are still bands out there that are keeping the flame alive. Very fucking obscure! – Kyle Spanswick
ENGORGE:620 Ridge Rd, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071 USA Dark Horizon Recs: 6435 West Jefferson, Ste*666, Ft. Wayne, IN 46804 USA www.darkhorizon666.com

FOZZY

– Happenstance

– Megaforce Rec

Formerly "FOZZY OSBOURNE," **FOZZY** dropped the infamous last name before they were set to release their first CD. At that point, the band seemed like a mere side project for the lead singer, Moongoose McQueen (Chris Jericho of WWE fame), and members of the late STUCK MOJO. **FOZZY** put out their debut CD, but never hit the road in support of it, which I assume is because of the busy schedule of Moongoose...

Because they are not a back up band, like Kelly Osbourne has, **FOZZY** actually has decent musicians and songwriters. Despite being the first stab at a real band for Moongoose, **FOZZY** has some good stuff. *Happenstance* keeps traditional metal aspects alive and well, while not leaving out some more modern styles of playing. However, you won't have any "mad hip-hop beats" anywhere in this album. Since the foundation of **FOZZY** was, to me, a joke at the beginning, mainly due to the name and the hiding of the people behind the band, I was VERY skeptical when I first heard about it years ago. Come to find out, **FOZZY** is down for pounding out some decent, original tunes for the metal heads and WWE fans worldwide. A main chunk of **FOZZY** is still a novelty, being that 50% of the songs on both albums are covers from classic metal bands. If cover tunes are your thing, then you'll eat this up in a big way! So with a warm and forgiving production, *Happenstance* will hit you with a burning hammer and snap your neck. – Jim Mills **FOZZY**: PO Box 1915, Valrico, FL 33595 USA www.fozzyrock.com
Megaforce Recs: PO Box 1955, New York, NY 10113 USA www.megaforce.com

THE HAUNTED

– One Kill Wonder

– Earache Recs

THE HAUNTED have made quite a name for themselves as one of the premier thrash metal outfits in the underground in recent history. *One Kill Wonder* further establishes their stranglehold with a blistering eleven-song set of new material. *One Kill Wonder* opens up with "Privatation of Faith Inc.," an excellent "Seasons In The Abyss" style intro track that leads into the killer speed thrasher "God Puppet." "Shadow World" bases itself around AT THE GATES styled melodic guitar parts with a great emphasis on palm-muted stomper breakdowns. "Everlasting" is an ultra fast in-your-face type of number, as is the majority of the album from then on out. Driving, technical, vicious – this is a damn good album in every respect. Highly, highly recommended. – Ryan Bartek
Earache Rec USA: 43 W. 38th St, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10018 USA www.earache.com

HOPE DIES LAST

– Hope Dies Last

– Independent Release

It's a hard thing to review a band that you know personally. If you're buds with the members, you sometimes don't want to let the "opinion" bleed over into the friendship and what not. Luckily, I don't have to worry about that with this band. The style of **HOPE DIES LAST** can't really be coined with a genre. **HOPE DIES LAST** fuses a slew of styles like punk, emo, metal, blah blah blah. Don't jump the gun and think they sound like the whiny styling of emo or whatever, because they don't. **HOPE DIES LAST** keeps hooks in the forefront of the writing, and the rawness to keep the ugly side of life gleaming bright and true. Throughout the 38 minutes of gloom and doom, one will find themselves scratching at their skin, trying to wipe off the filth that you see in your town. It may be hard for you to do, but you need to give it a shot. It'll be a good thing. – Jim Mills
HOPE DIES LAST: 330 Central Ave, Pmb#36, Fillmore, CA 93015 USA www.hopedieslast.net

IMPIETY

– Kaos Kommand 696

– Osmose Prod

The genre for black metal has depleted since its fiery uprising in the early-mid '90s, because of the famed murders and church burnings. Bands would go to their local Wal*Mart (or into their sister's make-up drawer) and make themselves look lame. Yeah, that means the corpse paint. Lame. My favorite was the black metal midget, "It". He said he was sooo evil that he could not take on a normal human form, so he was a midget, who wore corpse paint. And he's a midget, who wore corpse paint... And he's a midget, who. . .anyway, I guess he said this in an interview, while sitting on phonebooks. With that being said, you should not take black metal seriously. I first read about the band **IMPIETY** in another magazine, and I thought it was hilarious! The way the band described their music, the packaging of the CDs, it was swell. At that point, I thought that I should not invest any time into **IMPIETY**. For the new album, *Kaos Kommand 696*, it keeps the anti-kristian efforts there, and there has to be some desecration of anything "holy" for a true black metal band, and they do! The simulation of weaponry destroying a church while a choir is belting out the oldies. That is only a mere glimpse into these demonz from Zingapore. With the efforts of a good mastering job, "Apokalyptik Nuklear Battlebeasts" comes attacking like no other. The black metal is in full effect! The rest of the album pours out their hearts and souls, with such songs as "Blood Red Angelshred" and "Bestial Genocidal Goatvomit." Awesome, just awesome! It's fast, ugly and krazy. – Jim Mills
Osmose Productions: B.P. 57, 62990 Beaurainville, France www.osmoseproductions.com

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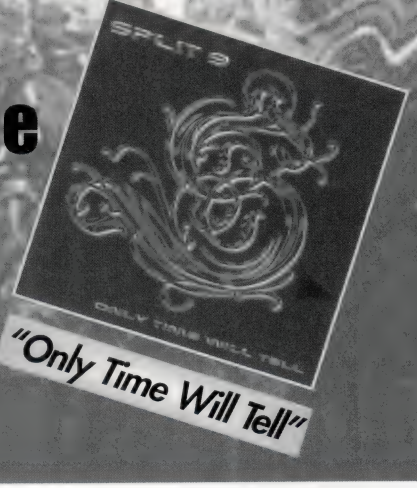

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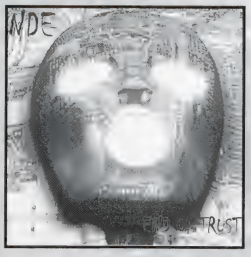
LEVAL BLESSING – *Leval Blessing* – Barbarian Records

When I first heard of this six-piece from Port Washington, WI, I was warned early on that they were different. The most common advisory was usually, "They have two vocalists, and they both *inhale* when they sing. It's sick." My curiosity was sparked, and the first listen made my gut wrench and the hair stand up on the back of my neck. The vocals sounded, well, *wrong*. That's exactly one of the reasons **LEVAL BLESSING** are so goddamned cool. Where is the precedent? No vocalist(s) that I know of have ever done so, and the music behind the voices is intense. Their music is a mixture of thrash, hardcore and death metal. There are chugging, stomping riffs, high speed guitars, and pummeling breakdowns, all fronted by some of the most gut-wrenching vocals out there. The production is a little thin, but you still hear everything just fine. If you aren't curious enough by now, either you don't care or I didn't make myself clear. – Adam Sagan
Barbarian Records: 254 West Gilman, Madison, WI 53703 USA

MALICE 420 – *Hateful Preachings...For A Mindless People* – Independent Release

Forget the all too familiar **420** slapped onto San Diego-based **MALICE**'s logo (for legal reasons). There's nothing gimmicky about this top notch heavy metal band. Lovers of explosive thrash with an old school vibe will trip out on *Hateful Preachings*. No trendy guitar sounds or nu-metal posturing here. The **MALICE** sound is what you'd expect from a pissed off band, influenced by the likes of SLAYER, PANTERA, and DYING FETUS. Matching the brutality of the music are the band's venomous lyrics. (The track "Crimson King" is so explicit that the lyrics couldn't be printed in the CD booklet. Fans have to visit the band's website to view them.) With a recent award for best local metal band, airplay across the pond, and now a killer new CD to show for their work, **MALICE 420** is on a roll. – Jon "K" Konjoyan **MALICE 420**: 2610 Meadow Ln, Escondido, CA 92027 USA www.malice420.com



NDE – *End Of Trust* – Crash Music

End Of Trust is the bone crushing disc that got this energetic, Cleveland-based, heavy-core band signed. If you know much about Cleveland, you know that it's the home of "The Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame" and has produced more than its share of noteworthy bands. Add **NDE** to that list. No overnight sensation, this talented group worked hard for many years to develop a fan base, and to create a sound that fans of both PANTERA and SLIPKNOT might agree on. Like their last CD, *Fix* (previously reviewed here), *End Of Trust* is chock full of ferocious grooves and is first rate quality. Having MUSHROOMHEAD's recording engineer on your team doesn't hurt, either. Now signed to Crash Music, singer Robert Reinhard, bassist Wally Howell, and drummer Greg Cook are well positioned to take their experience and their brand of heaviness to the national level. – Jon "K" Konjoyan **NDE**: PO Box 2297, Streetsboro, OH 44241 USA www.nde1.com
Crash Music: 4025 East Chandler Blvd, #70-B3, Phoenix, AZ 85048 USA www.crashmusicinc.com

POLTERCHRIST – *Demo 2002* – Independent Release

Brutality is an odd term to use when describing music. Often times, bands use it to compare themselves to others that have paved the way for extreme bands. As a fan, a band that uses a monotone, guttural singer, with constant blast beats and numbing guitars does not cut it for me. It's easy to do, and way overdone. New bands are becoming stale with new ideas.
POLTERCHRIST is not a stranger to fans on the East Coast, as they have played with some decent bands, and played a bunch. With the experience under their belts, they would need to sit down and think of writing music that had not been beaten down into the ground already. Another step for them was to get Brian Griffin to help them clean their sound up. After seeing the band DEATH years back, with Brian doing the live sound, I thought he was pretty damn good as a sound man. DEATH was not a band that just anyone could pull off. Not only did Brian Griffin do a bang up job, but the cheese-steaks in **POLTERCHRIST** really hit a home run with their demo. They have creative guitar writing, as well as some sharp drum playing with lots of time changes and brutal breakdowns. Very similar to hardcore bands, but without the gang vocals or predictability that you find in those bands. This formula keeps the listener honing in at 100% attention, waiting for the next thing to induce the urge to kill. – Jim Mills **POLTERCHRIST**: 723 Hickory, Secane, PA 19018 USA www.polterchrist.net

PSYPHERIA – *Embrace The Mutation* – Heretic Sound

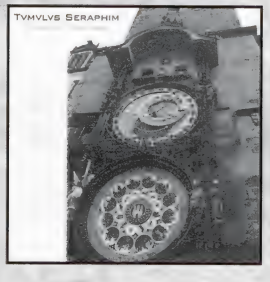
Premier northern California metal lords, **PSYPHERIA**, have signed with Heretic Sound and released their most ambitious work to date. This eight song disc is a bit of a departure from many extreme metal recordings. It blends the modern death metal influences of bands like IMMOLATION with the classical music forms of BACH or LIZST. What's intriguing is to hear **PSYPHERIA**'s brutal style and particularly, singer Adam Roberts' dark vocals, juxtaposed by beautiful keyboard fills. (The keys were recorded by TESTAMENT's Eric Peterson.) Contributing to the sonic pleasure is an excellent recording and very clean playing. Throw in some jaw-dropping artwork from Jon Zig, a super-glossy lyric-packed CD booklet, and there's not much to complain about. *Embrace The Mutation* should move **PSYPHERIA** further along in its goal of being a major player on the national and world metal stage. – Jon "K" Konjoyan **PSYPHERIA**: 2224 Halsey Cr, Davis, CA 95616 USA www.psypheria.com

SOL EVIL – *Dawn of Infinite Obscurity* – Quadrivium

Led by lead vocalist/mainman Lord Mordor, **SOL EVIL** is a ruthless extreme black metal band based out of Southern California. *Dawn of Infinite Obscurity* is the group's first album and an absolutely crushing debut in every facet. The drums are unrelenting, the vocals are howling, satanic and guttural and the bass and guitar shred equally, tearing it up with devastating thrashy blackened death-metal riffs. **SOL EVIL** pay homage to the black metal gods on this one, blasting forth a nuclear assault of sonic fury in the vein of old-school MAYHEM, DARK FUNERAL, MARDUK and DARKTHRONE. No bullshit here – this ep is solid. *Dawn of Infinite Obscurity* is one hell of a noise-fest, guaranteed to ignite the black flame within us all. Highly, highly recommended. – Ryan Bartek **SOL EVIL**: 3250 Panorama Rd #30, Riverside, CA 92506 USA http://solevil.cjb.net
Quadrivium: 501 West Valencia Dr, Ste#I, Fullerton, CA 92832 USA www.quadriviummetal.com

SPAWN OF POSSESSION – *Cabinet* – Unique Leader Records

SPAWN OF POSSESSION play a spastic style of technical death metal. The riffs as well as the song structures are complex as shit, wandering all over the fucking place! The vocals match the music, hyper and sung very fast. The drumming is just as technical and complements the music very well. The riffs are hardly repeated so there is a lot here to digest, which keeps it all from getting boring. It is hard to compare this band to another, so let's just say that it sounds like a Unique Leader release, brutal and sick! There are eleven tracks here, so it's a fairly good length. **SPAWN OF POSSESSION** have the formula down and I feel that we'll see much more from this band in the future. – Bill Laerton
SPAWN OF POSSESSION: Krafslösa V.8, 39590 Kalmar SWEDEN www.spawnofpossession.com
Unique Leader Records: PO Box 6544, Los Osos, CA 93412 USA www.uniqueleader.com

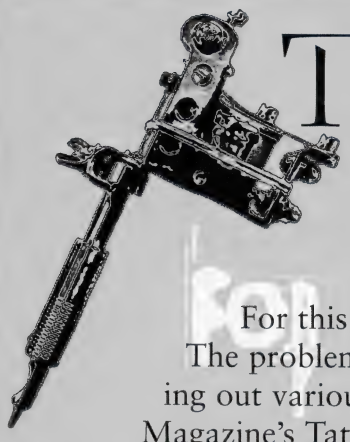


TVMVLVS SERAPHIM – *Centenarians' Divine Lvnacy* – Beyond…Prod.

TVMVLVS SERAPHIM evoke dimensions of obscurity consisting of fleeting, undecipherable voices, distant, sutle fluxuations, abrasive decay and floating atmospheric soundscapes. Listening to *Centenarians' Divine Lvnacy* is comparable to waking with a head full of half forgotten dreams. This is ambient that ranges from somber waves of sound to horrifying transmissions from somewhere beyond consciousness. There are five tracks present here, the first and the last consisting of multiple parts, some conjuring feelings of solitude, others utter dread. The packaging fits the music well, not tying one down to a specific theme, but leaving it more open to ones own personal interpretation, obscure yet avant-garde. Great stuff for a rainy day or grim evening. Fans of SCHLOSS TEGAL and NECROPHORUS take notice. – Kyle Spanswick Beyond…Prod.: C.P.5057 Via Catalani, 16154 Genova Itally www.beyond-prod.com

WITH IMMORTALITY – *The Aroma Of Spread Labia* – Independent Release

WITH IMMORTALITY rules! I discovered this group on the web, where I saw pictures of the band hanging with IMMOLATION and CANNIBAL CORPSE. Song titles like "Gargling Diarrhea," an appearance at this year's March Metal Meltdown, and their tribute to South Park persuaded me to check out their demo. What I got was an impressive nuance of musical assault with lots of unique twists in riff writing and interesting arrangements. These guys have chops. Vocalist, Rob Holt, sounds intensely guttural without being cookie-monsterish. The playing is clean and the recording, very good. Their Pennsylvania neighbors Relapse Records should check this out, and you should too. While you're at it, inquire about **WITH IMMORTALITY**'s wicked live disc. – Jon "K" Konjoyan
WITH IMMORTALITY: 615 Seneca Ave, Norwood, PA 19074 USA www.withimmortality.com

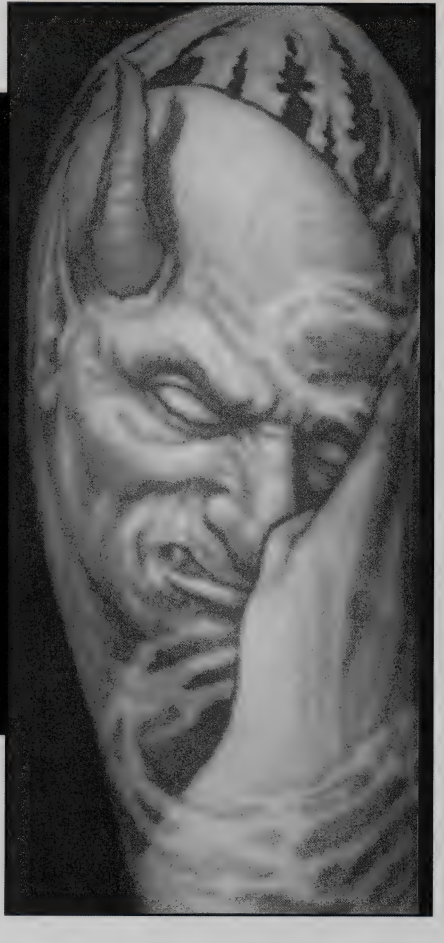


TATTOO GUN

Featuring Liorcifer

By Kelli Malella

For this issue I thought I would get back to tattoo artists, rather than tattoo collectors. The problem was deciding whom I wanted to interview. After a lot of searching and checking out various websites, I finally found a tattoo artist worthy of gracing the pages of Pit Magazine's Tattoo Corner...or shall I say, worthy of desecrating these pages (Yeah, I know...I'm cheesy!)? The artist's name is Liorcifer, and he works at Last Rites Tattoo in New York City, owned by world-renowned tattoo artist Paul Booth.



Liorcifer's interest in art was always there, especially in the medium of photo-realistic art. His attraction to tattoos was present at the age of eleven, when he took up drawing and worked on his art everyday. Then there was a desire to transfer his art from paper to flesh. By doing so, he would be able to leave his mark upon the world, a mark that would scar it for life and not go away until the owner of the tattoo was dead and buried. To Liorcifer, tattooing requires an artist to be trained in different limitless mediums in order to make a piece flow accurately with the customer's body. "It is like drawing, sculpting, and graphic design, all working together keeping factors like aging and movement in mind. Also, the commitment and permanency of a tattoo gives it impact, greater than just selling someone a painting."

Liorcifer got his first tattoo when he was 15 years old. At that point he started to hang around a shop in Tel-Aviv, Israel, trying to learn as much as he could. "I knew this was what I wanted to do. I spent the next two years drawing tattoos for friends until I was finally taken seriously and given a proper apprenticeship in 1994, when I turned 17. I spent the next year learning how to pierce, make needles, and do the usual shop grunt work while learning tattoo basics before I actually did my first tattoo. I started out doing smaller tribal and flash work and gradually, over about three years, I moved on to more intricate, custom, freehand designs. I spent four years working in Tel-Aviv, then two years in Miami, and for the last three years I've been working in New York City. I'm always learning more. I don't think you ever stop learning, and that is what keeps me hungry and progressing. I'm always trying to do better and come up with something new." He has now been working at Last Rights for two years and the experience has been unbeatable. "I am the first apprentice Paul has taken on in his 14 years of tattooing, so you can imagine what an experience it has been. It is a perpetual learning environment, and I have been able to focus on my art more than ever in the constantly dark atmosphere at Last Rites, which is nothing but inspiration." Being the first apprentice to one of the most well known tattoo artists in the industry must have been nerve racking and somewhat stressful, but a priceless opportunity. In the beginning, Liorcifer felt a lot of pressure, but as the time went by it turned into the best learning environment an aspiring tattoo artist could ask for. "It keeps me on my toes and doing my best. I am so grateful to be

constantly pushing the limits and expanding my knowledge and skills."

Liorcifer's influences, as far as other tattoo artists go, started when he first began to tattoo. He was living in Israel, where magazines were his main source of influence. It was at about this time when there were certain tattoo artists that were starting to do some groundbreaking work. "All I saw in magazines was amazing work, from beginning to end, from artists like Paul Booth, Guy Aitchison, Filip Leu, Aaron Cain, Jack Rudy, Tin Tin, Alain... so many killer artists with the ability to make a tattoo look like an oil painting." His influences can be seen in his work, but there is no doubt that he has created his own style that people are starting to become aware of, which is "still forming and changing all the time". When checking out the shop's site I noticed that he had mainly black and gray work, which led me to believe that he had little interest in doing color work. "I do specialize in black and gray work, which I am naturally drawn to, being a macabre artist. I get more requests for black & gray work, but I really enjoy doing color work too; gore looks fantastic in color! Most of my more recent color projects are still in progress, which is why there aren't more on the website."

I was curious how he got to where he is today in the senses of creativity, design and workmanship. His reply was, "Dedication. I just keep working, creating and learning as much as I can. Keeping an open mind to constructive criticism really improves what I do. When I am not tattooing I am drawing, painting, sculpting and experimenting with as many different mediums as I can to expand my artistic abilities." Liorcifer makes a point of keeping himself in a dark atmosphere, which isn't hard considering where he works. "Music, movies and imagery all add to it. I think everyone has a dark side, some more than others. Some people don't want to confront it. I do." When people want to get work done, they tend to let Liorcifer just go at it, and sometimes they will come to him with an idea. "For the most part, I am free to explore and freehand my tattoos. My clients obviously give me a starting point to work from, whether it be visual reference, a few details about what important ideas they want to display, etc. We always talk to see if I'm into the art before I start anything. If the artist isn't into it, it won't look right, and Last Rites customers know that." So, does someone like Liorcifer ever find the time to do things other than tattoo? No. "I have always been a shut-in and workaholic. I usually only venture out to shows or when friends come to visit. Mostly, I just sit at home and draw. I always have tattoos to prepare for and creating makes me feel good. I live close to the shop and Paul and Sarah are like family, so hanging out at the shop is like being with your best friends."

When it comes to the tattoo industry, Liorcifer feels that it is definitely changing for the better and "faster than ever". "I can't keep up with all the killer work that is coming out! There are amazing artists who have only been tattooing for a few years, coming from Fine Arts backgrounds. It blows my mind! At the same time, we are gaining more acceptance on a global scale. People are realizing that tattooing is an art form, not just a skill, and more and more galleries and museums are interested in what we are doing, as a community." So, what was my next question, you ask? Naturally, I wanted to see if he was a metal head. "I have been a metal head as far back as I can remember. I started out listening to IRON MAIDEN, METALLICA and SLAYER, and it has just progressed from there. Right now I am mostly into black metal: BURZUM, DARKTHRONE, KRISIUN and IMMORTAL, to mention a few, as well as soundtrack work, such as *Hellraiser*. Some of my all-time favorites are SLAYER, MY DYING BRIDE, the first few SEPULTURA and OVERKILL albums, and CANNIBAL CORPSE. There is so much great metal out there; it is hard to mention it all. Plus, I am constantly discovering more and more underground bands."

The last question I had for Liorcifer was what advice he would give to someone that wants to learn to tattoo. "I would tell aspiring tattoo artists to go the old-school way. If there is an artist you look up to then get work done by that person. With time you will get to know them a bit, and if you are serious and pay attention, then you will learn a lot from just watching and being there. Perhaps it will lead to an apprenticeship. Go to conventions and watch artists work, attend educational seminars, ask questions. Practice your art skills on paper at home before you start marking people permanently. If you can't do it on paper then you definitely won't be able to do it on skin. There is as much to learn technically as there is artistically, as well as disease-wise. Working with flesh is difficult. It moves, it bleeds...and you need to be well educated and aware of what you are up against. With dedication, patience, and practice it will work." So if you are ever in the NY area and want to get some truly dark work done, check out Last Rites and set up an appointment. With the amazing talent developing out of that shop, you are sure to walk away a most content customer!

Last Rites Tattoo
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Merauder

BLUETALITY

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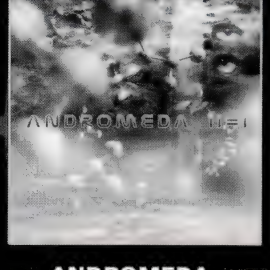
Featuring Dave Chavarri of Ill Nino on drums.



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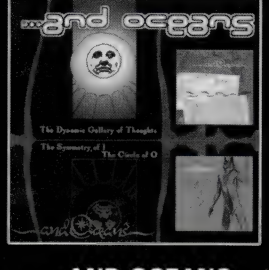

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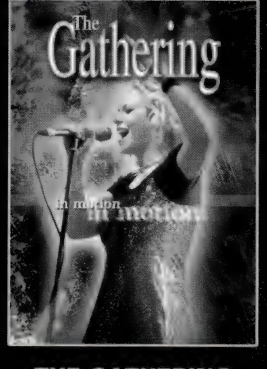

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LIVING IN THE PAST

By Mark Kadzielawa

CANNIBAL CORPSE
WIDESCREEN
RARE PERFORMANCE FOOTAGE OF CLASSIC TRACKS PLUS THE STORY OF SABBATH IN THEIR OWN WORDS
BLACK SABBATH
THE BLACK SABBATH STORY VOLUME ONE
Live In Dallas, Tx 2002

Not much has happened in the re-issue scene over the last few months. The DVD scene is just getting bigger and bigger as everyone continues to embrace this new technology. There are many new releases, and also some old ones that reappear for your enjoyment. This is absolutely great for the fans, but with so much to choose from, it can be hard to pick at times. On the other hand, it's better to have more than nothing. Whichever it is, go out there, find what you like and enjoy it, and don't tell us we didn't warn you!

The absolute winner for best re-issued material spanning the last year goes to IRON MAIDEN, for their *Eddie's Archive* box. This is an outstanding gift for the die-hard MAIDEN fan. The box itself, is very nicely designed and sculpted; just looking at it makes you feel intrigued. Inside, we find a set of six discs and a complete tree, showing how the band and its members evolved. (It's hard to believe how many people were part of this band in one way or another.) In addition, you get an Eddie-approved shot glass to have a few, provided that you're old enough to have a drink, and reminisce about all the great times that, of course, involved IRON MAIDEN. Musically, what we have here is a collection of vintage live recordings, mostly from the Bruce Dickinson era. The quality and intensity of these performances are very high, making it an essential supplement to your MAIDEN library. A collection of B-sides completes this set, and is the only place where the other two singers make an appearance. It's a wonderful package that will make MAIDEN fans long for even more box sets like this one. Contact: www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com

CANNIBAL CORPSE has been splattering our ears with gore for over a decade now, and this time they want your eyes, as well. The *Monolith Of Death Tour '96-'97* DVD is out on Metal Blade Records. It's a compilation of various concerts and appearances the band did on their tour. CANNIBAL CORPSE is known to be a very intense live attraction. This DVD is no exception, although nothing can truly translate the live feel of this band. There's simply nothing like being there. In addition to the live footage, the DVD offers an interview with the band, a photo gallery and discography. Contact: www.metalblade.com

BLACK SABBATH Story Volume I & II is finally out in DVD format. Originally released in the early '90s, it's a great visual history of the band. The set includes many interviews and clips, as well as concert footage. It's put together really well, and the DVD is expanded by about 50 minutes. Many clips included on this set were very hard to come by, originally. Here, we have them in crystal clear quality. This set does the best possible job of allowing us to see the history of the band through the eyes of its members. The history of BLACK SABBATH is very difficult and rather complicated, especially in the 1980's when there were many line-ups, none of which could sustain any longevity. However, each incarnation of BLACK SABBATH had its fans, and is fairly represented here. Contact:www.santuaryrecordsgroup.com

LIZZY BORDEN has re-issued *The Murderess Metal Road Show Live* on DVD. This old video footage was nearly forgotten, but with the recent reformation of the band and the renewed interest, it came back to life. What we have here is a very intense and visual performance. It's very typical of the '80s, and in some ways it's very nostalgic. For those reasons, no one is doing it this way anymore. Musically, LIZZY BORDEN was a very innovative band that never really reached the superstar level. This offering shows us the band's morbid identity, mixed with quality songwriting and

If you are a label re-issuing any old albums or releasing DVDs, e-mail Mark Kadzielawa: thornadoad@yahoo.com

performance. Watching this DVD brings back a lot of good memories. In addition, this set includes an interview, a photo gallery and discography. Contact: www.metalblade.com

SUPERJOINT RITUAL already has a live DVD out, titled *Live In Dallas, TX 2002*. Phil Anselmo and the crew give a very uncompromising performance here. This is a great show from a gutsy band that takes no prisoners. In addition to a great show, the DVD offers a look behind the scenes, interviews with the band members, and clips. This is as underground as it gets. Contact: www.santuaryrecordsgroup.com

BLUE OYSTER CULT has finally released a DVD, titled *A Long Day's Night*. What we have here is a great performance, taken from Chicago's Navy Pier/Skyline stage. Being from Chicago, one has to understand that each year BOC puts on a great show there, making Navy Pier like a Mecca for all die-hard BOC fans. Having attended a few of those shows, I could see why they chose this venue to film and record. The atmosphere there is great. The DVD shows BLUE OYSTER CULT in great shape, always on tour and ready to deliver the goods.
Contact: www.sanctuaryrecordsgroup.com

NAZARETH finally has a DVD out. This one is a live recording of their recent appearance in Glasgow, titled *Homecoming*. This is NAZARETH playing for the hometown crowd. It's a very electrifying performance. The band, as always, sounds great and is in great form, but I've never seen a bad NAZARETH show. This is a very professional and unique sounding band. Singer Dan McCafferty is one of the best sounding, most original artists in hard rock. Contact: www.eaglevisionusa.com

OVERKILL has a DVD out, *Wrecking Everything: An Evening in Asbury Park*. This is the definitive OVERKILL document, as this band is purely a live act. OVERKILL's studio output is fine, but it's on stage where this band comes alive. This live film is no exception. I've never seen a bad OVERKILL performance. This DVD comes as a two-disc set and includes the show, a documentary, footage from the band's personal collection, and a look into the studio. In other words, everything OVERKILL related can be found here. This is a must for any OVERKILL fan, or anyone into good, riff-driven, heavy music.
Contact: www.spitfirerecords.com

MARILYN MANSON has issued a DVD, as well. This one is titled *Guns, God, and Government World Tour*. As always, there are plenty of shocking moments here, otherwise the man wouldn't live up to his name. In addition to the concert performance, we have a chance to look behind the scenes and experience the craziness. This DVD is great, as it brings MANSON fans closer to its creator. Whether you're a fan or not, you can't escape the impact this performer is making on the music scene nowadays. Personally, I find MARILYN MANSON to be a very funny individual.
Contact: www.eaglevisionusa.com

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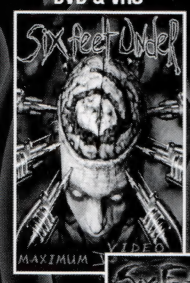

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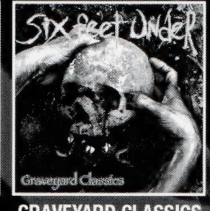

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